



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

Natural Rights of Man ~ 1852

512
107

Gov 512.107

**HARVARD COLLEGE
LIBRARY**



**TRANSFERRED
FROM THE
GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**

•

•
•
•
•
•

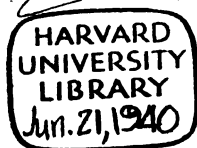
0 A BRIEF INQUIRY
INTO THE
NATURAL RIGHTS OF MAN;
HIS DUTIES AND INTERESTS:
WITH AN OUTLINE OF THE
PRINCIPLES, LAWS, AND INSTITUTIONS
BY WHICH
LIBERTY, EQUALITY, AND FRATERNITY
MAY BE REALIZED THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

'And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.'
Gospel of Christ.

LONDON:
JAMES WATSON, 3, QUEEN'S HEAD PASSAGE,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1852.

Gov 512,107



Deposited by
Harvard Business School Lib.

CONTENTS.

Introduction	5
------------------------	---

CHAPTER I.

Of the Origin and Purpose of Society	9
--	---

CHAPTER II.

Of the Governmental, Political, and Legislative Departments	51
---	----

CHAPTER III.

Of the Religious, Moral, and Intellectual Departments of Society	25
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Social, Industrial, and Commercial Departments .	41
---	----

CHAPTER V.

Objections Answered—Concluding Remarks	64
--	----

A Brief Inquiry into the Natural
Rights of Man -- Liberty, Equality
& Fraternity --

1852.

v. rare & interesting
by a disciple of Brontë O'Brien
[perhaps O'Brien himself?]

1.

2.

3.

4.

INTRODUCTION.

ALTHOUGH, from the very constitution of human nature, the life of man on this earth must ever be a mixture of good and evil, perfection and imperfection, yet it is obviously the interest, if not the duty, of man to exert all the wonderful powers with which he is endowed (and they are more vast and extensive than is generally believed) to make his condition as happy and as perfect as he possibly can. To effect that desirable result is the legitimate and ostensible purpose of all societary institutions; but whether they succeed or not must naturally depend upon the amount of truth, wisdom, and justice comprised in them. That the principles hitherto ruling society are defective, is evident from the general fact, that the aspirations for human welfare felt by the philanthropist, the moralist, the religionist, and even by the honest political economist and statesman, have never been fulfilled by the societary arrangements of any country, ancient or modern. It may, indeed, be asserted that these arrangements have always been more or less inimical to man's true interests; and that, but for the peculiar faculty of physical adaptation to existing circumstances possessed by man, and the innate moral goodness of his nature, the race would, ere now, have become extinct; or, a large portion of it transformed into something less dignified, and less happy, than the irrational animals—a result which is, indeed, to some extent, actually accomplished in the present day, before our eyes. We need but refer to Ireland for an example of the process by which bad social and religious institutions can, in the first place, deteriorate the character of the people almost beyond the hope of redemption, and then exterminate hundreds of thousands of

them by lingering starvation. Even in this boasted metropolis of the world there are thousands of our fellow-creatures whose true interests, rights, and liberties are less cared for than are horses and dogs, and who have fewer guarantees that the most ordinary means of preserving a comfortable state of being shall be afforded to them, from day to day, than those animals possess.*

How society can be reorganized, so as to prevent those appalling evils—how, in short, it can be made to produce a condition of human life that shall render man, not only satisfied and contented with his position in the universe, but glorying in it, thereby vindicating the justice, wisdom, and beneficence of his Creator—is the greatest problem he can have to solve; and, being the greatest, it comes among the latest in the order of progress. As a rational, not an instinctive being, man has been left to work out his own salvation—to learn knowledge and wisdom by experiencing the evils of ignorance and folly; and reason tells us that any other mode of teaching men would derogate from his dignity as a free and responsible agent in creation, not the mere instrument of an imperious necessity. When we have discovered that society is based on a wrong foundation, and constructed on

* ‘Does it not appear a strange result of the terrible statistics of society,’ says the *Times*’ leader of the 23rd May last, ‘that upon the average 1 person out of 20 of the inhabitants of this luxurious metropolis is every day destitute of food and employment, and every night without a place for shelter or repose?’ Not at all strange to those who can trace the workings of bad government, land monopoly, usury, and profit-mongering. And yet the same paper, perhaps the same writer, only a few weeks afterwards, tells us that ‘Every young man in this metropolis, if he will only attend to his business, *whatever it is*, and keep out of scrapes, is a rising man, and has all the prizes and honours of the nation before him—if not for himself or his children, at least for his childrens’ children!’ How consolatory to a poor man—say a lawyer’s clerk, struggling to exist upon twenty shillings a week—be told that he may one day be Lord Chancellor; or, at any rate that one of his descendants may! To be sure, the chances are somewhat against him—perhaps a million to one; but then, it is proverbially a lottery! But the ordinary blessings of life ought not, and need not, be made a lottery of. The honest and industrious ought to be *sure* of a rational competence. Yet, as society is now governed, the contrary is generally the case: virtue suffers and vice is rewarded.

bad principles—and when, moreover, we perceive that we possess the power of reorganizing and reconstructing it, the fault is our own if we neglect to exert those powers for our own benefit. Man has no right to blame God, Providence, or nature, for the existence of evils which he himself can remove.

If *Sociology*, or the doctrine of social life, is not a positive science, it is an art to be perfected by scientific rules; and man has but to search diligently in order to discover those rules. In such discoveries, time is not to be measured by the life of an individual, or even by the life of a nation. The progress of discovery in even the physical sciences is slow. The elastic force of steam was unnoticed for thousands of years; and its application to the purposes of man is still in its infancy. And the law of gravitation which unfolded so many of the mysteries of nature was not demonstrated till Newton wrote his '*Principia*' a century and a half ago. That the true system of society is yet practically undemonstrated, is therefore no proof that it never will be demonstrated and acted upon—especially when it may reasonably be assumed that a high state of advancement in the physical sciences is necessary before the moral and social sciences can be properly understood, and fully carried out. Thus it happens that, although the world is now, according to scriptural reckoning, 5612 years old, a satisfactory definition of human rights, obligations, and interests, is still a desideratum in popular literature. The present little work is a humble contribution towards supplying that deficiency, by enunciating, in a consecutive and condensed form, such important natural truths, in relation to the well being of human society, as have been made known to us by the experiences of the past, or as are the logical inductions of the most advanced minds that have been employed in elucidating the highest interests of man.

The compiler lays no claim to literary skill in his task, and has sought after perspicuity and concentration, rather than elegance of diction or ornament of style. The motives which have actuated him in the compilation are an intense hatred of falsehood and tyranny, and an unextinguishable love of truth and justice. Personally, he desires the reign of truth and justice, because he wishes to enjoy freedom. He knows and feels the degradation to which he is subjected by being robbed of his rights, and compelled, for a mere subsistence, to become a wages-slave, with the contingency, too, of not finding employment even on those terms, having then no alternative left him but starvation or suicide; and, while life remains, he *will never cease to protest against the system which commits*

this injustice upon him. All he wants are his rights—his political and social rights as a human being: he desires no privileges. No man can be privileged without intrrenching on somebody else's rights; and he desires to receive no privileges at the expense of his fellows. He protests, too, against the ignoble doctrine, that a man may, if he chooses, bargain away his birthright of freedom for the mess of pottage which a bastard and corrupt civilisation can give him. No man has a right willingly to sell himself into slavery; because, as it encourages tyranny and deteriorates the race, it is unjust to his fellows and to posterity, whatever temporary advantages it may give himself.

In concluding this short introduction, the compiler expressly deprecates any insinuation that this pamphlet is published with a treasonable design against the peace and order of society, or with a view to incite to the slightest infraction of the laws of his country. He merely avails himself of a free press to advocate reforms and propagate opinions which he conscientiously believes are calculated to avert the most serious national calamities, and which could be adopted without real injury or spoliation to a single individual, high or low. But, unless sanctioned by the public opinion of the majority of the people, they could not be carried into effect; and until then, therefore, they must be considered by the reader as strictly *in nubibus*.

A BRIEF INQUIRY INTO THE NATURAL RIGHTS OF MAN.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE ORIGIN AND PURPOSE OF SOCIETY.

MAN is, universally, a gregarious animal; prone, under all circumstances, to herd with his species. One of his most imperative and instinctive wants is communion with his fellows. Neither his physical, moral, nor intellectual requirements and powers could be adequately provided for or cultivated in a state of isolation, or even in mere familism. To form societies, therefore, is a natural law of his being: to live in society is the normal condition of man. It is a primary natural right; and there should be no occasion for him to forfeit any other legitimate right for the privilege of living in the social state—that being the only condition in consonance with his natural propensities and faculties.

Immediately societies are formed, morals (or manners) are developed, and rights and duties, more or less perfect, begin to be acknowledged. Apart from society, the individual has merely the right of physical life. He has no claim of duty from his fellows, because he has performed no duty towards them; but when the idea of moral rights and duties becomes operative upon public opinion, various societary institutions naturally spring up as necessary expedients and provisions to maintain and enforce those rights and duties.

Man being mainly dependant for wisdom upon the teachings of experience and the accumulation of knowledge, all societary institutions must, in the order of nature, have their origin in empiricism, or expediency, rather than in the calculations of reason looking into the future. It may be assumed, however, that these institutions have always been in harmony with national localities and epochs, and that they have supplied some immediate necessity of the people, although founded on no truthful or scientific basis. Speech is used for the intercommunication of thought before the science of grammatical analysis, or the philosophy of language, is discovered; and society must exist in a tentative, or experimental and changeful, state, until the harmonic laws which should regulate it are made known and understood.

The beau-ideal of societary institutions may be held to be, that, as a unity, they should form a scientific engine or machine for duly cultivating and supplying the physical, moral, and intellectual faculties and wants of man; for promoting the progress of the race towards the highest degree of perfection of which its nature is susceptible; and for ensuring to every individual, in every age, the possession of all his natural, inalienable, and imprescriptible rights and liberties, through which he may be free to devote his own powers and faculties for the promotion of his own happiness, so far as may be consistent with the practice of the same freedom among all his fellows. //

When nature implanted imperative wants in our common nature, we may assume that she placed at the control of man the means of their legitimate gratification; and the social machine should offer a better guarantee for the supply of those wants than mere individualism or family isolation can do. But if, while supplying one want, or providing one means of enjoyment, comfort, or happiness, it refuses to supply some other legitimate want, or annuls, thwarts, or circumscribes some equally legitimate right, the machine is defective: it produces an evil; and, as it is man's province to endeavour to overcome evil (in which, indeed, he finds, when successful, his highest gratification), he neglects his true interest and duty if he does not at least attempt the construction of another.*

* Not, however, without fully calculating the end, and what the danger and cost of arriving at that end may be. LOUIS BLANC penned a piece of excellent advice on this head *after* the French Revolution of 1848, in which he took so prominent a part. In the 4th number of his *New World*, published in 1849, we find this striking passage:—"And let no one say, 'Behold abuses! Behold injustice! Let us make a revolution, and then we shall see.'" What! should we engage ourselves in a career so fraught with perils, and leading to new things, without having previously asked of ourselves what we want, and determined the point which we must attain? When we have to astonish so many misled consciences, to agitate so many minds, to alarm so many interests, should we neglect satisfying our minds as to the final result? and should we play that great game without ascertaining whether the gain is worth the risk? No, no; a social change is not so small a matter that it should be pursued as an adventure. We have had commotions enough, if they are to be characterised in history only by the ruins they heap, and the tyranny they only displace. To him who dares to cry to the people, "Follow me!" the people have a right to reply "Where are we going?" and woe to him if he fail.... Let us march onwards, but with our eyes open."

Were society constituted on a scientific basis, the individuals composing it—instead of being, as at present, split up into a series of classes and coteries, pursuing subversive and opposing interests—would form an harmonic whole, working together for the general good. The ideal perfection of this harmonic arrangement would be such, that did the general result injure one individual; or did one individual attempt to subvert the general good for his own presumed selfish advantage, the infraction of the harmonic law would quickly be made known by some parts of the social machine being thrown into disorder, or, as the mechanicians would say, out of gear; and rendered unable to perform its proper part in the social engine.

The business of the legislator is not to endeavour to force the laws of nature into subjection to any artificial conception of his own, but to discover and follow the universal and harmonic laws of nature herself. Hence the inevitable failure of all new systems of society which do not naturally and gradually grow out of previous systems. The nature of man is unchangeable, but it can be indefinitely refined. The most scientific arrangement of society that could be devised could only work upon the old materials of humanity: it could add no new element to them—it could only readjust and perfect them; and, by introducing the requisite checks, compensations, and balances against subversive action, make them work harmoniously together, and enable the machine to effect the end desiderated, that end being in accordance with the legitimate aspirations of man.

What these legitimate aspirations are may be thus briefly summed up:—Man has a right to aspire to live his own life; and to preserve his own will and his own faculties from being subjected to minister to the exclusive or to the preponderating advantages, or to the caprice, of any of his fellows. The first and highest result, then, which society should effect is LIBERTY—the liberty of the individual; liberty preserved by law—the law of *equal rights*, which is true EQUALITY.* The general result of true liberty and equality must be FRATERNITY; because, where the liberty of all is duly circumscribed by the rights of each, an identity of general interests must exist. This is true fraternity. Reason, the cultivated moral sense, Christianity, and the history of the past, fully justify the aspirations of man for the realization

* Not an equality of wealth or property, which the enemies of real progress, in order to throw odium upon the idea, pretend the social reformers desire. If wealth be *honestly* acquired, no one is robbed of his rights (as at present) by one man possessing more than another. But property acquired by unjust laws is nothing less than legalized plunder.

of liberty, equality, and fraternity; and no sophistry, no artifice, can controvert the truth of this proposition.

Societary institutions can have no higher, nobler, or sounder aim than that of promoting the realization of true liberty, equality, and fraternity among the people. These sublime words constitute the tests by which to try all human arrangements, political, social, religious, and moral; and none more efficient can be substituted for them. Bentham's celebrated criterion of public good has been much vaunted—'*The greatest happiness to the greatest number*'—defining, as he does, happiness to mean the acquisition of pleasure, and the avoidance of pain. But this criterion will not admit of a satisfactory application to practice, because it would sanction the crimes of the majority, however enormous, provided that that majority escaped pain and enjoyed pleasure; and the slavery, degradation, or misery of the minority might be assumed to be an unavoidable necessity, in the very nature of things. This has, in fact, been openly avowed by English statesmen; and the late Sir Robert Peel, not long ago maintained, in his place in the House of Commons, that a large amount of poverty and misery was the natural concomitant of a 'high state of civilisation!'—a remarkable instance of self-confessed legislative imbecility, and also of that enormous abuse of words which has become so common in the world, where, indeed, scarcely anything is called, conventionally, by its true and proper name.

If we calmly inquire how far the English system is calculated to fulfil aspirations for liberty, equality, and fraternity, we shall find that the system is organized really, and even avowedly and designedly, to promote the very opposites of those blessings. In English society, an intricate system of gradation of rank, based on material wealth, and not on mental or moral superiority, is studiously kept up, notwithstanding its injustice and galling slavery is more or less felt by every individual, in every step of the ladder, from the peasant to the peer. Our political system boasts, in theory, of giving political freedom to all its subjects, but, practically, it enslaves all parties. The Crown is merely the nominal head of the system, and although by a fiction in law it has a suppository veto in state affairs, in reality it is the mere tool of its ministers. The Ministers are dependent upon the dominancy of particular parties in the legislative Houses; and the majorities in those houses are maintained, for the time being, by the preponderating influences of particular class-interests; or by intrigue, place hunting, jobbery, and prejudice. In the House of Lords—principally on account of the absurd *prestige* attached to artificial rank and title—family cliques have so long usurped the head offices of the state as to have acquired a kind of prescriptive right to them. In the House of Commons, which, by *another fiction*, is pretended to represent the interests of the mass

of the people, the interests of property and aristocracy only are really attended to. The very mode of electing the Commons' House is one of notorious bribery and corruption, in which even an honest rich man has no chance of gaining the suffrages of the electors (these being, too, merely a fraction, instead of the whole people*)—but in which an honest poor man would be laughed to scorn by the very people whose welfare he was anxious to promote; so corrupt has the system made the people—a system in which the two infernal elements, MAMMON and PRIDE, have everywhere extended their baneful and demoralizing influences.

The English system is one, in fact, in which the interests and prejudices of one class are so perpetually opposed to the interests and prejudices of another class, that without an everlastingly-recurring practice of mutual concession, it could not hold together with sufficient strength to maintain even its theoretical character of a system, but would long ago have been repudiated as utter chaos. So numberless and various are the compromises required throughout the entire scheme—at any rate, so far as the middle and upper classes are concerned—that *compromise* is now considered as the very essence and even beauty of our 'glorious constitution.' Only a few weeks ago our Prime Minister, the Earl of Derby, eulogized this practice of compromise in the most extravagant manner, in an after-dinner speech at the Mansion House. 'The whole system of Government,' says his lordship, 'in every constitutional country is a system of compromises and concessions—not of compromises of principle for the sake of expediency, but of compromises between conflicting expedients, and mutual concessions between *apparently conflicting interests*. The whole system of our constitution is one great compromise. The throne itself is based upon a compromise between arbitrary monarchical power, and those befitting and dignified restrictions which are imposed by constitutional Governments upon the minds of Monarchs. Our House of Lords is a compromise between an hereditary, exclusive aristocracy, and a body partaking of the advantages of the institution of Nobility, at the same time that it is enabled to claim this great advantage—that it is daily, or at least yearly and perpetually, recruited from the ranks of the people, thus blending the aristocracy and the commonalty. The House of Commons is a compromise between that influence which is exercised by the

* Not long ago a leading article in *The Times* stated that the elective franchise in England was bestowed upon only 28 per cent. of the adult male population; in Wales, 32 per cent.; in Scotland, 25; and in Ireland, only 2 per cent.! The writer added these words to his statement:—'We cannot imagine how a voice can be raised against the propriety—against the absolute necessity of a change.'

higher classes, and the restrictions imposed by partial exclusion; between those elements on the one side, and the democratic power of the people on the other, by which ample and *full means are given to the expression of every popular sentiment, and of every popular wish* (1). The Church of England—long may Providence preserve it to us!—is a compromise, and a most valuable compromise between the unrestrained power of spiritual dominion, and the absolute dependence of the clergy upon the caprice of the flocks over whom they are called upon to preside. Our whole system is a system of compromises.'....

The Times—that great public mystifier—in commenting on Lord Derby's speech, remarks:—'Compromise is the soul of British society, as every Englishman knows, to his benefit, if he acknowledges this truth; to his loss, if he rejects it.' The writer might with far more truth have said—'Humbug and Hypocrisy are the soul of British society, as every Englishman knows who desires to circumvent his fellows for his own selfish advantage;' and, that being the case, every honest man who dares to deny the justice, necessity, and utility, of humbug and hypocrisy, is looked upon as the greatest of all humbugs, and richly deserving the persecuting hatred of society for his folly and presumption!

Lord Derby's speech is in truth a piece of vague and illogical declamation, replete with the grossest fallacies and misstatements: a specimen of canting hypocrisy only to be equalled by the cant of the conventicle. It is mere pretension to say that the system of compromise extends throughout society. It is true that the upper and middle class enter into mutual compromises and concessions; but what concession do either class make to the wants and wishes of the mass of the people? Do they concede to the unpropertied many the right of electing any portion of that assembly miscalled the House of Commons, so that the interests of the poor and the labouring classes might be fairly represented? Or do they concede to them any share of municipal or judicial power; or any voice in the election of their ordained spiritual teachers? Neither do they concede to them their natural right to claim an inheritance in the soil of their country; nor, as was recently proved by the conduct of the manufacturing capitalists, will they permit them to have a voice in regulating the hours of labour, or the rate of remuneration they shall receive for that labour.

To reconcile the people with the gross injustice and anomalies of the present system, and to make them believe that they are always compensated by reciprocal compromises, is the evident purpose of Lord Derby's vague and fallacious generalizations; but such sophistry can only deceive those whose intellects have been bewildered or stultified by the hypocritical jargon and false teaching of the present degenerate age.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE GOVERNMENTAL, POLITICAL, AND LEGISLATIVE DEPARTMENTS.

IN order to review the characteristics of the present system, we may divide society, with sufficient precision for our purpose, into the following departments:—The *Governmental, Political, Legislative, Religious, Moral, Intellectual, Social, Industrial, and Commercial*.

It will be found that these departments are so connected together by natural affinities or relations, that no positive line of demarcation can be drawn between them; that they are constantly acting and reacting upon each other; and that each will be more or less influenced by the defects, either of theory or practice, of the others. If the principle of the political and governmental department be false, it will soon corrupt the moral and social; and *vice versâ*; and preaching in advocacy of abstract justice between man and man by the clergy, will be of little avail in counteracting the demoralizing effects of a commercial and social system based on land-monopoly, profit-mongering, and usury. Motives of private interest are stronger than those of public good; and if, practically, society is so artificially constructed that a man dare not follow the dictates of his conscience, but must be always disguising his natural feelings in deference to some conventional power which, for the time, is stronger than truth, of what avail is it to preach to that man of the beauty of truth, or to tell him that 'honesty is the best policy?'

It would, consequently, be impossible, and useless if possible, to bring about the perfection of any one of these departments, and to leave the others in their unreformed state. It would indeed be putting new wine into old bottles, and mending old garments with new cloth.

Although political government has taken various forms in different countries, and among different races of men, it can scarcely be doubted that the proneness of the herd of mankind to *manolatry*, or hero-worship—to follow the most unscrupulous leader, rather than think for themselves as to what is best for their own interests—has had great influence in the formation of all governments. In every clan or community, there would be found at least one individual possessing more physical or mental prowess than the rest; and he would be always ready at the call of his fellows, if

not from the impulse of his own activity or ambition, to accept or assume responsible offices, either of trust or danger, and thence to take the direction of state affairs into his own hands. Finding his position give him many substantial advantages over his fellows, as well as to invest him with a degree of honour and dignity highly flattering to his self-love, he would naturally take measures to maintain his position, and make it subservient to his own personal benefit, and that of his family or adherents, as well as to the ostensible benefit of the people who had placed themselves under his charge, even admitting that he had set out with an honest desire to benefit them. Hence the natural origin of despotic governments; and whether, as in some nations, government takes an apparently less concentrated form, and becomes what is called oligarchical, or aristocratical; or whether its base is further widened, and it becomes a democratic republic, its diabolical essence is still the same; and its results are equally baneful to human happiness. It is still the creation—either from a slavish and blind subserviency, a stupid fear, or from false notions of expediency, of a *vast power*, more or less external to the people themselves, and, consequently, more or less dangerous and obnoxious to their true interests and liberties. The instalment of kings, tribunes, consuls, presidents, or parliaments, is a practical annihilation of the natural equality of human rights, and constitutes the fall of man into political tyranny and slavery.

The supposed necessity for a concentration of political power in the hands of one or more persons, who are thereby constituted a government or state, cannot rationally be assented to; and it will not bear critical examination, even as the best means of preserving order in society, or providing for the security of life and property. If all men were put in possession of their full rights and liberties, and no one had more than his due share, society would quickly become what it ought to be—self-governing. ‘Society,’ observes PROUDHON, ‘is by nature self-governing; and he who lays his hand on me to govern me is a usurper and a tyrant—my declared enemy.’ Every man should be his own king, and his own governor. ‘Kings, aristocrats, and tyrants of every description,’ says ROBESPIERRE, ‘are slaves in revolt against the sovereign of the earth, which is the human race, and against the legislator of the universe, which is nature.’

Want of brotherly love among men—want of faith in humanity—has been the main upholder of state governments. Having no real confidence in each other’s virtue or honesty, men have believed that society could not be ‘saved’ from anarchy and dissolution by any power less authoritative or less omnipotent than state-power; and it has always been the policy of the governing classes to foster this lamentable and pitiable delusion. Because *some men had ungovernable passions*, it was rashly concluded

that *all* men required an external repressive force to keep them from doing violence to each other. To provide against this imaginary danger, men appointed governors over themselves; but, as Burke observes, 'a worse and more perplexing difficulty now arises—*how to be defended against the governors!*'*

No man, or class of men, can be entrusted with undue power without danger to themselves or others. In our prayers we supplicate Deity not to 'lead us into temptation;' and we ought, therefore, to take care that none of our fellows be exposed to temptation by any acts of our own. The best of men have been corrupted by power, especially by governmental power; and when once corruption has commenced at the head of the state, it soon spreads through all its instruments down to the meanest official, because every one is interested in pandering to his immediate superior, and to prop up any system which gives him pay or subsistence.

If despotic governments, aristocratic governments, and even popular and republican governments, are each productive of slavery and degradation to the people—if they each fail in their pretensions to promote the happiness of the governed—it must be a delusion to suppose that the evils inherent in them separately can be nullified by combining them together, and styling the combination a 'constitutional government,' in which everything latently vicious in kings, lords, and commons separately, are to be counteracted by a presumed amalgamation. But the admixture of three poisons can scarcely be expected to produce an innocuous compound. It may be that the separate parties of this scheme may occasionally serve as checks to each other's villany and rapacity, through the opposition engendered by party-spirit (an inevitable consequence of the system); still, so far as the governed are concerned, all state-parties will cordially unite in restraining the power of the people over them within the narrowest limits possible; and when they fail of doing it by fraud, they will not hesitate to do it by force. In short, no form of government now existing, or which has existed, has admitted of adequate checks being interposed to prevent the powers entrusted to it

* See '*Burke's Vindication of Natural Society*' (first printed in 1756), a work most undeservedly neglected, and which alone would justify the eulogy recently passed on that distinguished man by a reviewer in *The Times*. 'Burke's intellectual prowess,' says the critic in that paper, 'is the admiration of the world. Since Bacon quitted life, England has not possessed so marvellous a son. Philosophy dwelt in his soul, and raised him to the dignity of a prophet. Gorgeous eloquence was his natural inclination, and practical wisdom his chief accomplishment.'

from being turned against the liberties and interests of the people, because they have all been constituted on the principle that government should be the *master*, and not the *servant*, of the people; yet, as Christ said in reference to the sabbath, 'the sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath,' so may we say (and the Scriptures will justify the assertion), *the state should be made for man, and not man for the state.*

If history is to teach us anything worth knowing, it should convince us of the incalculable amount of physical, moral, social, and even intellectual evil that has everywhere resulted from state or governmental craft. All the international and even civil wars that have desolated the world are directly chargeable to it; and, but for its sake, nations would never have learnt the art of war as a science, nor have committed so great a sin upon humanity as systematically to set apart and train one portion of mankind to become the hired assassins of another portion, at the bidding, and to subserve the designs, of state diplomatists and party leaders. Governments have, verily, as PROUDHON remarks, proved themselves to be 'the scourges of God to discipline the world;' and it is surely time that the dread lesson they have taught should be appreciated. Priestcraft has done mischief enough in the world; but 'show me,' says Burke, 'any mischief produced by the madness or wickedness of theologians, and I will show you a hundred produced by the ambition or villany of conquerors and statesmen. Show me an absurdity in religion, and I will undertake to show you a hundred in political laws and institutions.'

The English have been taught to believe that indefinable abstraction the '*British Constitution*' as the very perfection of human wisdom. Lord Palmerston, in a recent speech in relation to Spain, thus eulogised the constitutional system:—'My opinion is, that constitutional monarchy is the best form of government *that has ever yet been invented by the wisdom of men.* By constitutional government, I mean monarchy tempered in its action, and assisted in its functions, by the co-operation of a Parliament. It appears to me that such a form of government, while on the one hand it secures to a nation that public freedom which cannot be expected from a pure despotism, on the other hand gives and affords to private individuals that freedom within the limits of law which is too often not enjoyed by them under a republican form of government.'—(*Times*, 22nd May, 1852.) But, like many other popular assumptions, this opinion will not bear the light of free inquiry. As Burke truly remarks—'The several parts of this species of government, though united, preserve the spirit which each form has separately. Kings are ambitious; the nobility, haughty; and the populace, tumultuous and ungovernable. Each party, however in appearance peaceable, carries on a *design upon the others*; and it is owing to t' that in all ques-

tions, whether concerning foreign or domestic affairs, the whole generally turns upon some party matter, rather than the thing itself.*

* This was written nearly one hundred years ago; and that the system has not improved much since may be gathered from the following extract from a leading article in *The Times*, of the 26th May, 1862, on what the writer calls the 'Do nothing Parliament' of Lord Derby:—

'As each party arrives in succession at the helm, it is forced to consult its self-preservation, not the public good, and to propose the measures on which it happens to be pledged, or in which it may have a special interest, not those which have only the general reputation of being, like reform in chancery, great public wants. No good measures can be passed or carried into effect, without the creation of considerable powers; so, whenever any good thing is to be done, the opposition has always a handle in our constitutional jealousy of interference, and of authority in general. So the more substantial the object, and the more effectual the method for obtaining it, the greater is the advantage given to political opponents, and, at the same time, the greater their inducement not to let the party in power do a good thing. The result is, that legislation, as conducted in the splendid establishment at Westminster, is a mere game, in which chance and a low description of finesse divide the results. Standing round a table, first one side and then another takes the cue or names a colour. Gambling is abolished elsewhere only to be concentrated at the head-quarters of order and of law; and we have no lotteries except where office is the prize, and the nation has nothing but blanks. This certainly accords with the saying that the House of Commons is the best club in town. But how long will this last? Will the people always be satisfied with King Log, who, after all, is a very expensive king, for the modern King Log, if he has no hands, has rather a wide mouth? Then we are told, with much complacency, that evils cure themselves in this country. So they do, with a vengeance. A hundred crying political evils have cured themselves in England—by revolution. We are a tolerant and long-suffering people, but we rise at last, and do things effectually. Since the commencement of this century we have had a dozen serious agitations, caused by the inertness or obstinacy of parliament, and crowned by results which politicians of the old school did not hesitate to call "revolutions," "robberies," "sacrileges," and so forth. These terms of extreme reprobation have been so often applied of late years, that they have lost their force, and respectable men begin to relish a little judicious revolution, confiscation, or impiety. Now, what if this vicious custom of doing nothing in parliament should at last fare as the other abuses alluded to? What if some sharp

By entrusting the power of the state to a House of Representatives—especially when they are endowed with the control of the public purse—a many-headed tyrant is set up, most dangerous to the liberties and interests of the people; for although it may limit the power of the Crown, the lords, the clergy, and, indeed, every other component part of the community, it will rarely set limits to its own power. English history gives us at least one very convincing proof that our House of Commons is more ready to *increase* its power than to *decrease* it. The repeal of the Triennial Act in the Reign of Geo. I. has been designated as ‘the most daring assumption of power upon which an English Parliament has ever ventured.’ In our opinion, however, the Parliament of 1852 is composed of men capable of attempting far greater assumptions!

In a so-called representative assembly place-hunting, jobbery, and corruption are sure to be prevalent; the few honest men in it are outvoted by the knaves and fools; and as the responsibility of each member is lost in a concrete majority or minority, no pangs of conscience are experienced by him, however hideous may be the consequences of his vote. Government by representation or delegation is, in truth, a relic of feudalism, unfitted for the present time; and could only be made honest were it possible to prohibit the exercise of any discretionary power in the representatives, and prevent them from taking advantage of their position to concoct plans and intrigues inimical to the interests of the people they had undertaken to represent. But, let what will be done, a representative can only represent himself, and will naturally consult his own interests, feelings, and prejudices, rather than the interests of his constituents.

After a nation or a people have committed the folly of setting up a government to rule over them, the evil is not to be remedied by any alteration or reform in the mode of electing it, or its instruments. Nor does it appear practicable to frame a sound system of electing the members of a representative government. A

and sudden remedy should be found whereby the work of the nation should be put into more honest and business-like hands? There is a certain people in the world that takes the law into its own hands, when the courts are indecisive, weak, or procrastinating. We may never come to such rude expedients as “committees of vigilance,” but we shall come, for we have frequently come, to such expedients as a grand public demonstration that acquires the force of law, and compels parliament to register its decrees; and, though the forms and fashions of that process have varied from time to time, according to the matter or the age, there can be little doubt that the spirit which suggested them *still survives among us.*’

mean-spirited, reckless, and dishonest candidate will use measures to gain over voters to his interest, such as a noble-minded, honour-loving candidate would scorn to use; and as the majority of electors can have no adequate means of knowing and comparing the merits of the rival candidates, the most pertinacious, unscrupulous, hypocritical candidate—especially if he is rich, and have a title—will be certain to gain a preponderating influence over them.

The disgusting trick (*disgusting* is the befitting epithet) which the majority of the National Assembly of France, elected by universal suffrage, played upon the people by the disfranchising law of May, 1851, is a recent proof of the danger of entrusting popular rights and liberties to delegates; and, were the people wise, would stamp on their minds for ever an utter contempt of all kinds of representative government.* And we are rejoiced to find that a few public writers in Germany and France are now engaged in denouncing it as a delusion and a snare. 'Delegation,' says VICTOR CONSIDÉRANT, 'is an impudent mockery—an attack upon the sovereignty of the people. To delegate that sovereignty is to abdicate it. The people only ought to make the laws; and if it be convenient to have them prepared by proxies, those proxies will never be a power external to the people.' In further treating this important subject, he says:— 'It is a question of liberty. It is liberty which makes the man. The slave who willingly accepts the condition of slave is not a man, he is only a two-footed beast of burden. Man is not made to have any master, or masters.† Man ought not to obey. If there could be any valid reasons why Peter should obey Paul, there would be just as many why Paul should obey Peter; or Paul and Peter could not be of the same species. The government of the people by the people: all democracy is contained in that. We have been defrauded by delegation. No more delegation: the direct exercise of the sovereignty of the people by the people!'

'Direct legislation,' says M. RITTINGHAUSEN, 'is the only government worthy of an enlightened nation; the only govern-

* Had the French Assembly been put an end to by a wise, benevolent, and patriotic dictatorship, no true republican could have regretted the extinction of the political life of the base majority which it comprised. Moreover, it may be questioned whether Louis Napoleon's government is not as good, and as hopeful for humanity, as any government which Changarnier, Cavaignac, or such like pretended republicans, would have given to the French people.

† 'Neither be ye called masters,' said Christ; 'but he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.'

ment by which the sovereignty of the people becomes a truth.' And he remarks, further:—' If the people are legislators, they ought to make all the laws without exception; freely, and without constraint: if they do not do that, if they have other legislators than themselves, they have *masters*: *there is no medium* !'*

With respect to the best mode of carrying out the principle of direct legislation by the people, much difference of opinion will probably exist. At present, our object is to advocate *principles*, and to leave details to be settled by discussion and experience. We shall merely, therefore, express our belief that no intricate machinery will be required in the system; and that no obstacles will present themselves that may not be overcome with safety and facility, by the temporary introduction of a few stringent precautionary measures. The main difficulty and danger would probably be how to deal with the army and navy, and the numerous adherents of the war power. It would be necessary, in the first place, to give the soldiers and marines their full rights as citizens, to insist that they never be called upon to quell civil commotion; but be kept up solely as a defence against foreign aggression.—Assuming that every town or district has its guildhall, or place of public assembly, all the adult males in each locality, who had been previously registered as eligible to vote, would be brought together on a certain day, say in numbers from 500 to 1000. A Chairman, or President, would be chosen by acclamation; and the first act of direct legislation would commence by the choosing of an Executive Body for the whole nation, who would be empowered to carry out the wishes of the entire people, but who would have no power to act on their own authority under any circumstances whatever. The number which should compose this Executive would be decided at the same

* Speaking of the general elections the other day (7th July), *The Times* remarked—' A few hours will place beyond doubt our probable *masters* for the next five or six years.' How some of these *masters* are likely to treat their *servants*, may be predicated from what has passed at the hustings. ' Mr. Beresford,' says *The Times*, ' can find no expression for the audience which he addressed at his nomination, and whose interests, whether electors or non-electors, he is bound to represent, more endearing than that they are " the vilest rabble he ever saw ;" and imitators have been found of the good manners of Sir F. Thesiger in wishing " the cheap loaf sticking in the throats " of their hearers. Happy are the prospects of an election begun under such agreeable auspices.' Another proof of their mastery is the fact that the candidates almost invariably refuse to give pledges to their constituency as to how they would vote on particular measures. And yet they have the impudence to say they represent the people !

time; and the parties proposed for election would of course be the '*élite*' of the nation. The votes would be taken by ballot; and the numbers for and against would be counted in the presence of the whole assembly, and printed in the local papers. A temporary committee would be employed to add up the votes of the whole country, and to declare the names of the elected Executive in an official Metropolitan Gazette, which would be forthwith published for the information of the people. The Executive thus elected would hold office for a certain time, and on specified conditions as to salary and duties; but they would have no power to initiate any law. When a certain number of citizens demanded a new law, or the reform of an old one, the Executive would be obliged to summon the people within a prescribed time to discuss and determine the question. In the discussions the President of each assembly would first open the debate on the *principle* of the law; and, if that be decided in the affirmative, the details for carrying it out are then discussed and settled. Due notice would be given of the day on which any law would be discussed in the assemblies; and the local press would aid the people in forming a correct opinion upon it. The votes would be sent to the Executive, who in due time would declare the result to the nation.

We need not dilate upon the simplicity and safety of this plan of legislation over the cumbrous and unsatisfactory method pursued in an assembly of delegated representatives; where, moreover, every question is sure to be decided by party spirit, and not by a conviction arrived at after a calm and deliberate examination of its merits.

Municipal and parochial government being already in existence, and being, moreover, the kind of government best suited to promote the local welfare of the people in each district, the present parish divisions, boroughs, cities, &c., might be preserved intact, especially as that would prevent the trouble and difficulty of organising the people in divisions for taking their votes on questions of legislation. All local regulations would be made by the adults of each parish, or other local division, precisely as the general laws were made; but those regulations would be subject to revision by the whole people, if a certain number of citizens petitioned the executive to have them made a national question, on the ground that they were not in harmony with the general laws of the nation.*

* We believe that the first proposition in modern times for the adoption of the system of direct legislation by the people originated with that unjustly maligned patriot, philanthropist, and statesman, MAXIMILIAN ROBESPIERRE. The idea seems to

But, however just in principle and perfect in practice the governmental and political departments of a nation might become, unless the same degree of justice and perfection were reached in the other departments of society, the whole could not work together for the general good. Unless the people can be brought to entertain far different notions of their relation to their Creator, and to each other, than is now generally current among them, to endow them with the faculty of direct legislation would be only to introduce new devils into society in the place of the old ones: one unclean spirit might be exorcised, but seven others might be inaugurated; and the last state of that people might be worse than the first. It appears to have been so in the democratic republic of Athens, where direct legislation of the people was introduced by Solon; and from the failure of which the philosopher was led to consider the despotism of one man as a lesser evil than the tyranny of the many. It is remarkable, too, that Burke, clearly as he pourtrayed the evils of all artificial governments, came at last to the same conclusion, because he did not fully understand the natural equality of human rights and duties, nor the just doctrine of the production and distribution of wealth. But in his days the 'fullness of time' had not come; and to men of more recent date has been allotted the task of demonstrating how society laws, the production of human art, can be made to harmonize with the laws of nature, or divine art, and thereby accomplish the regeneration of man.

have slumbered till the revolutionary period of 1848, when M. RITTINGHAUSEN, a member of the National Assembly of Frankfurt, proposed it to the Assembly; but he states that not one of the 574 members of that Assembly gave him either attention or support. M. RITTINGHAUSEN soon afterwards published some letters on the subject in the *Democratique Pacifique* of Paris; and the question has been further elaborated by M. VICTOR CONSIDERANT, in a pamphlet the English title of which runs thus—'The Difficulty Solved; or, the Government of the People by the People themselves.' It is sold by Watson, of Queen's Head Passage, Paternoster Row; where also may be had an English translation of the letters of RITTINGHAUSEN,—The cause of democracy and free-thought owes a large debt of gratitude to the liberality and sagacity with which Mr. Watson caters for it in his publishing department.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE RELIGIOUS, MORAL, AND INTELLECTUAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIETY.

ONE of the most universal characteristics of man is the religious tendencies of his nature—taking the term religion, in its most comprehensive sense, to mean a belief in some mysterious power, or powers, governing the universe, whom man considers it either his duty or his interest to supplicate or worship by prayers, rites, or ceremonies, and towards whom his mental vision looks with either hope, gratitude, or apprehension. And these religious beliefs, doctrines, or superstitions, will always exercise considerable influence over his moral character, as an individual, although they may often be at variance with the conventional doctrines and practices dominant in society, and to which his assent may be merely nominal, or external.

The natural religious sentiments and propensities of man are sufficient to account for the origin of priests and sacerdotal institutions. The priest, like the chief or king, is the creature of the people; and without the cordial support of the majority of society, he could not maintain his position any more than the political or governmental chief could. An excess of the religious sentiment, combined, perhaps, with views of an ambitious nature, may have led him, in the first instance, to assume the direction or cultivation of the religious propensities of his fellows; and, when once installed in power, he would immediately set about founding the necessary institutions for the maintenance of the doctrines and ceremonial rites and practices which he wished to prevail. The priesthood would thence become the sole repositories of religious formularies, precepts, and legends. After the introduction of written and printed language, these formularies and legends would take a more definite shape, and be collected in books, which would thence acquire the character of sacred rituals and oracles.

The important purposes which the sacred books of all people have fulfilled are manifest to the most superficial observer. To them, the cultivation of letters is chiefly indebted. They polish and fix the language of the people. They record those traditional geneæes and cosmogonies which, if not literally true, satisfy for a time the innate desire of man to form some idea of the origin of the world, and of his own existence. They give the character of a system to his religion, and furnish him with a basis *on which to build the laws which regulate his political, moral,*

and social principles.* They are considered by the people among whom they are current as written revelations from heaven; but, like the unwritten revelations of material nature, they are mysterious and apparently contradictory, and are therefore always misinterpreted at first. To unravel the mysteries and contradictions of both is the most delightful occupation of man, and furnishes him with objects of pursuit the most suitable for the healthy exercise of his faculties, and best calculated to promote the progressive advancement of the species.

The immediate or secondary origin of the prophetic and doctrinal mysteries to be found in these sacred books may be inferred from merely natural phenomena. Few people will deny the infinite variety of 'gifts' allotted to individuals of the human family, or that some of these gifts are so extraordinary that they could not have been predicated from the ordinary and normal condition of the human intellect or powers. Clairvoyants and instinctive calculators are familiar instances of some of these endowments in modern times. These gifted individuals are rare, it is true, but sufficiently numerous to establish a rational belief in their reality, as well as to keep alive a faith in something more spiritual than the philosophy of every-day life. Even the genius of the material philosopher, the discoverer, and inventor of the present day, is as wonderful, in one sense, as are the revelations of the inspired prophets and poets of former ages. Every such endowment is more or less miraculous or out of the ordinary course of nature. Nor can we reasonably deny the reality of the external miracles recorded in the early history of man, merely because such miracles are not repeated in our own days: at this stage of man's career on earth they may not be necessary in the plan of Providence. The sphere of miracle is merely the sphere of divine liberty of action. Miracles are strange, and to us unaccountable, exceptions to the ordinary laws of nature; but, after all, the exception is not more wonderful than the rule itself. To man everything is miraculous when he attempts to reason up to final causes, which all involve the most mysterious contradictions. In the pride of reason, we may carp at the

* The Jewish, Mahomedan, and Hindu civil codes are especially founded upon their religious creeds. The English law possesses no such venerable authority, being principally based on Acts of Parliament, all of which are more or less opposed to the spirit, and even the letter of the religion of the Bible. The penal laws of Moses are severe enough; but Moses did not recognize robbery and theft as deserving the dreadful and ferocious punishments of the hulks, Norfolk Island, or the silent system; and such barbarous and cruel inflictions are still more at variance with the teaching of Christ and his Apostles.

idea that a divine and omnipotent power would condescend to use apparently capricious, and even puerile, means to establish a religious system; but, as Goëthe says, the reason of man and the reason of God, are two very different things; and, elsewhere, a higher authority tells us that 'the foolishness of God is wiser than men.' Moreover miracles or revelations are no proof of the absolute truth or finality of any religion; and a free mind will put more faith in the conclusions of its own reason than in the *hocus pocus* of any miracle whatever, and will think no more of revelations and prophecies than he does of dreams (to which, indeed, they are analogous) unless the dreams teach something in harmony with science, reason, and experience. To such a mind, the Lord says—'Come, let us reason together'—'Produce your cause, bring forth your strong reasons;' and we may be assured that the deeper we inquire into the system of Providence, and its dealings with humanity, the more will the wisdom of that system be made manifest to us.

All the great religious systems of the world have *equal* claims to a divinity of origin, whatever the bigotry of the followers of any one of them may urge to the contrary. If one is to be looked upon as a special institution of Providence, the others must be regarded in the same light. The sacred books in which these religions are founded appear, indeed, to acknowledge this of each other, more or less distinctly. The Jews are often rebuked in the Old Testament for their uncharitable sectarian hatred of their neighbours; and in the New Testament we are expressly told that 'God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is accepted with him.' In the Koran (or Bible) of the Mahomedans, we read (chap. vi.)—'Follow that which hath been revealed unto thee from thy Lord; there is no God but He. Retire, therefore, from the idolators; if God had so pleased, they had not been guilty of idolatry. We have not appointed thee a keeper over them, neither art thou a guardian over them. Revile not the idols which they invoke besides God, lest thou maliciously revile God without knowledge. Thus have we prepared for every nation their works; hereafter unto God they shall return.' Also (chap. ii.) we find this passage—'They [the Jews and Christians] say, Verily, none shall enter Paradise except those who are Jews or Christians. Say [to them], Produce your proof of this, if ye speak truth. Nay, but he who resigneth himself to God, and doeth that which is right, he shall have his reward with his God.'

The tolerance of the Brahmanical Hindus towards other nations' faiths is so comprehensive, that Christian missionaries find it presents an almost insuperable obstacle to their attempts at conversion. Their philosophical religious charity is forcibly port-

trayed in the following passages, extracted from the introduction to a code of Hindu laws, compiled by a committee of learned Brahmans, at the request of Warren Hastings, in 1776:—‘ From men of enlightened understandings and sound judgments it is not concealed, that the contrarieties of religion and diversities of belief, which are causes of enmity to the ignorant, are, in fact, a manifest demonstration of the power of the Supreme Being.... The truly intelligent well know that the differences and varieties of created things are a ray of his glorious essence; and the contrarieties of constitutions are a type of his wonderful attributes.... He appointed to each tribe its own faith, and to every sect its own religion.... He views in each particular place the mode of worship respectively appointed to it: sometimes He is employed with the attendants at the mosque, sometimes He is in the temple of the adoration of idols—the intimate of the Mussulman, and the friend of the Hindu; the companion of the Christian, and the confidant of the Jew.’

The precepts and practices of the Buddhist religion—a faith which numbers among its followers perhaps a third of the human race—are equally tolerant. The Wesleyan missionaries in Ceylon (now the seat of the purest Buddhism) were recently obliged to confess, in one of their printed reports, that whatever good their schools might have effected, the parents of the children certainly laboured under the supposition that ‘ the religion in the schools was not in reality inimical to Buddhism, but that the two systems harmonized with each other; and that they and their children might, with perfect consistency, hold both religions to be true, and attend to the rites of both.’ ‘ Although’ (say the missionaries) ‘ this opinion is most erroneous, it is not inconsistent with the doctrines of Buddha.’ A native teacher in one of the Christians schools, a man of irreproachable character, we are told, having been discovered to have bowed down before the image of Buddha, in a Buddhist temple, was accused of hypocrisy in his profession of Christianity, but he denied the validity of the accusation:—‘ I believe Christianity to be true,’ said he, ‘ but I do not believe Buddhism to be false!’

The old Zoroastrian religion, the faith of the ancient Medes and Persians, whose followers are now dwindled down to a few hundreds of the sect called Parsis, principally resident in Bombay, did not fail to enjoin charity, liberality, and forbearance; and to inculcate the pre-eminence of works over faith. Zoroaster inquired of the *God of Justice*—‘ In what manner shall thy worshippers celebrate thy praise?..... The lord answered: “ Tell all mankind that every bright and luminous object is the effulgence of my light; at the time of worshipping me, let them turn to that side: in the world, there is no existence superior to light ”’ (truth).

The limited space we have allotted to ourselves in this inquiry precludes us from going into minute details respecting the origin, doctrines, morals, warnings, threats, and promises included in all religious systems; but our investigations have led us to conclude that on these points a remarkable analogical identity is to be traced. They all appear to have grown out of, and superseded less elevated kinds of belief and practice;* and they all predict their own supercession by still more exalted faiths to be evolved out of them by a more liberal, comprehensive, and enlightened interpretation of their respective doctrines and mysteries. The purest morality and the sublimest theology may be perceived in them all; mixed up, it is true, with much that is absurd, contradictory, and incomprehensible; but each of them teaching its followers the necessity of using their reason; separating the chaff from the wheat; and of holding fast only by that which is good. Like many of the elements of physical nature, the elements of religion are presented to us in double aspects—true and false at the same time; and are therefore liable at first to be misunderstood. Nor is it more surprising that man should draw erroneous conclusions from the puzzling data of religious elements; or that he should neglect the sublime and ultimate truths hidden in the dark sayings and symbolic rites and ceremonies of his creed, than that he should, even among advanced nations, have believed the earth a plane surface, and the sun moveable. Allegorical representations have been constantly mistaken for actual history; types for substances; and universal prophecies have been limited to localities and individuals. Texts which only bear a spiritual interpretation have been interpreted literally; and literal ones, when they promised salvation to mankind, have been tortured, twisted, or neglected, as being *too good* for sinful man to have the presumption to expect from his ‘Heavenly Father!’ But

* There is no doubt that the religion taught by Mahommed displaced very revolting and idolatrous practices among the Arabs. And how far superior is even the present idea of Christianity to any of the superstitions and moral codes of the world previous to its introduction! Before Christ preached the doctrine of equal rights, slavery was considered a natural and legitimate ordination. Even Plato so considered it; and the slaves themselves, when they revolted against their masters, had no higher notions than that of securing better terms for themselves, or of making slaves of their employers.—See O’Brien’s *Letters on the Rise, Progress, and Phases of Human Slavery: how it came into the world, and how it shall be made to go out*, printed in Reynolds’s *Political Instructor*, in 1850. We trust these Letters will one day be reprinted in a separate form. They deserve to be most extensively circulated.

ultimately, in the same way that man finds it necessary to be perpetually altering his preconceived notions on merely physical and material subjects—even those of long standing—so will he find it necessary to alter his views and opinions in relation to the data upon which are founded his religious principles and moral practices. In demonstrating the necessity of following this advice of St. Paul in proving all things, and in illustrating the modes by which truth can be separated from error, especially in theological and moral inquiries, no man has done more than the Rev. J. E. Smith, the editor of the *Shepherd*, the *Antichrist*, and other publications—a writer who has produced a large number of the most important disquisitions on theological, moral, and analogical science; and of whom it may be safely predicted that he will one day be referred to as the highest authority on those matters which up to this time the world has produced. We shall take the liberty of quoting him several times, and lament that our space will not admit of our doing so oftener. In the second volume of the *Shepherd* (p. 50) is a passage particularly applicable in this place. He there says:—‘Revelation is a peculiar word of God, purposely disguised in mystery, which creates a vulgar misconception of its meaning, that continues to agitate the mind until truth be elicited by ages of laborious investigation and theological controversy. The principal truth it contains is moral and religious truth. That truth, when elicited and reconciled to universal science, is a standard truth, to which as much certainty may be attached as to any scientific demonstration; and, moreover, it is a truth which never could have been discovered without Revelation, and the controversies of theology.’

In the next page he adds, with peculiar earnestness, these remarkable words, which he says so emphatically embody ‘the religion of the *Shepherd*, of Christianity, and of the Universe, that he should like it engraved on his tombstone:—“*To speak truth and falsehood together, and make it the task of man to sift the compound, is the royal prerogative of God.*”’

A far greater amount of liberty—both of mind and body—is to be found in the sacred oracles of all religions than is admitted by priests and bigots. ‘Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.’ The Christian system, when correctly understood, is especially based upon liberty, equality, and fraternity. But the clergy do not so teach it; neither are any of the institutions of society framed in the spirit to produce those blessings. The author we have already quoted (the Rev. J. E. Smith) forcibly remarks in the third volume of the *Shepherd* (p. 35):—‘They much mistake the nature of the Christian religion who suppose that it necessarily enslaves. Its corruption enslaves, but the genuine Gospel is the full liberty of the heir, and the free-born, when he has come to his inheritance. It is the end of the out-

ward law, being the law of the mind and the affections. It is susceptible of being refined even to the entire abolition of laws and magistrates of every kind. It is not from Christianity that any difficulty proceeds in reorganizing society, and remodifying its habits and customs—it is from men and women only. *If benevolence be the motive, and increased happiness the object, you have the authority of Christianity for whatever you do. Having the authority, use it.*

Notwithstanding the odium brought upon the Scriptures by false teachers, and by designing and ignorant priests—notwithstanding the cavilling of sceptics, learned and unlearned, no book has been looked upon with so much sanctity, or has exercised so much influence on the world as the Bible. Its wonderful preservation from remote ages; its translation into the principal languages of the earth; and the multitude of copies that have been produced by the printing press, give it an universality that no other book possesses. All that is now required to make it the readiest instrument for the regeneration of mankind is that the people among whom it has been sent (sent, too, by men who little think that it will one day become their bitterest enemy!) should be instructed how to 'read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest' it, in right earnest. They will then be made sensible of the deceptive character which a one-sided, timid, prejudiced, illiberal, sectarian interpretation of its doctrines, prophecies, and parables has given it; and will be convinced that the morality which it inculcates cannot be practised, and that its millennial promises cannot be fulfilled, until the laws and institutions of society are reconstructed so as to prevent the possibility of one portion of mankind making slaves of another portion, either bodily or mentally, by force or fraud, by statecraft or by priestcraft. With this conviction, and with the Bible's own authority for it, the people, especially the poor, will not be slow to demand that the true Gospel shall take the place of the counterfeit hitherto preached to them by a hireling clergy; and a new era will then commence for humanity.

After the light which the revelations of the Scriptures throw upon the origin and destiny of man, the principal truths they teach are moral truths, in consonance with reason, and in harmony with the nature of man. The term morality, as applied to human action, is but another word for justice—justice to oneself individually, and justice to one's fellows socially. But the correct appreciation of justice requires a large amount of knowledge, both in the race and the individual;* and further, unless that mys-

* Both morality and religion are therefore progressive sciences; and no generation can prescribe either moral practices or religious creeds for its posterity. That these sciences progress so slowly

terious faculty, the *conscience*, is sufficiently sensitive to be acted upon by the mind's appreciation of justice, the conduct of the individual will not be influenced by it. And what can keep the conscience alive under all the vicissitudes, trials, and temptations of life, but a deep and settled conviction of a responsibility for our actions, either in this world or some other? It is not enough for the interests of morality that we confine that responsibility to our fellows, because there are crimes which may escape human retribution; and, even poetic justice is not vindicated unless we carry man's responsibility beyond the grave. This cannot be done without the acknowledgment of the existence of a super-human power to whom we are accountable, and also the admission of the existence of a soul or spirit in man distinct from matter, and subject to totally different laws. Thus three most important theological doctrines are necessarily evolved by the mind's appreciation of the principles of justice: the belief in a God—the belief in soul—and the belief that the consequences of our actions follow us beyond this life. That which is just must be also true; and we need not fear the conclusions to which justice and truth may carry us.

We have seen how necessary the idea of God is as a basis for moral responsibility; but the idea rests on far higher grounds than mere expedience. We know that to some power beyond the secondary laws of nature the universe and man owe existence. The nature or essence of this power we cannot comprehend, neither can we comprehend the first cause of any of the principles of nature. In the same manner, reason gives us faith in the existence of a creative, conscious being, GOD, although reason utterly fails in all her endeavours to comprehend the mode of his existence, or the principle of his origin. Yet the absurdity of denying the existence of a self-acting Deity led even the pagan

is attributable to the fetters and clogs which conventional despotism and clerical and educational domination put upon the intellect. A free search after truth, in either morality or theology, is denounced as the very presumption of ignorance; and a man who dares to doubt any priestly dogma, or any moral code, sanctioned by fashion and custom, is considered a schismatical and dangerous innovator. Instead of logical argument, he is referred to 'authorities,' or 'the wisdom of our ancestors;' and if he refuses to pin his faith upon any thing but his own conscientiousness, he is politely reminded, in the solemn dulness of a hacknied quotation, that 'fools rush in where angels fear to tread.' We profess not to appreciate angels' fears; but we firmly believe that a man who refrains from exercising his reason upon any religious, moral, or social question, from a fear of the conclusions to which it may carry him, is not fit for freedom, and, in fact, cannot be made free.

Cicero to ask—'What can be more silly arrogant and misbecoming than for a man to think he has a mind and understanding in him, but yet in all the universe besides there is no such thing? Or that those things which, with the utmost stretch of his reason, he can scarce comprehend, should be moved and managed without any reason at all?'

A belief in God, however, and a belief in our responsibility to him for our conduct, does not necessitate us to believe in a revengeful and tyrannical God, or an unjust responsibility. 'God is love,' we are told; yet how can a rational man believe in such a God as the priests depict—an awful monster, the exaggerated exemplar of an earthly king, whose will is the only law his subjects must follow, and who must never approach him but as abject and cringing slaves! And if he believed in such a God, he would only fear him or defy him—he could not love him; nor, as a recent writer has remarked, would he cease to protest against his tyranny, even were he thrown into hell flames for uttering the protest!

The doctrine of eternal punishment, as now taught by the clergy, is the very acme of injustice; and is neither founded in revelation nor sanctioned by reason. 'Shall mortal man,' exclaims Job, 'be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his maker?' Scripture tells us that what a man soweth in this stage of existence he shall reap in the next; and we may assume that in the career for which we are destined, good and evil will ever be set before us to exercise our faculties; as, although the one may be always increasing, and the other decreasing, still we can form no conception of a desirable state of being in which these two opposite principles shall have no place. Nor let it be imagined that this version of Scripture will tend to weaken moral responsibility: on the contrary, it should tend materially to strengthen it, by the recognition of a rational accountability for actions, from which there can be no escape, in the place of an unjust responsibility having no proportionate relation to the powers entrusted to us. But not until the universal law shall have been fully revealed to man will even this degree of accountability be *justly* applicable to him. Until then, 'God hath included all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all'—sin not being imputed 'where there is no law.' When the universal law shall have been manifested, much will be expected from man, because much will have been given; and then, in sinning against it, we shall be committing that offence so strongly denounced in Scripture—sin against the Holy Ghost, which is the Spirit of Truth; because we shall then act against our own reason and conscience, and shall justly be 'damned'—that is, 'self-condemned.' This is the fire which shall 'try every man's work:' nevertheless, says St. Paul, 'If any man's work

shall be burnt, he shall suffer loss, yet he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire.'—(1 Cor. iii., 15). 'For our God is a consuming fire' (Heb. xii., 28); that is, if any man sin, and thereby disturb the harmony of the universal law, he shall suffer the effects of his error, or his fault, but the individual himself, as the necessitated recipient of imperfection, shall be saved. While under the curse of the law, each of us may say with St. Paul—'It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.'

With regard to the 'hell' of Scripture, the Bible itself may be quoted to show that it is a place where men are 'comforted in the nether parts of the earth;' and as the Apostles' Creed tells us that Christ 'descended into hell' after his crucifixion, that place and heaven must be identical, because Christ said to the thief who suffered with him—'This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.' And to this kind of hell we shall all go: 'All go into one place like the rivers into the sea;' and there we shall find the eternal correlations of good and evil, reward and punishment, pursuing us: 'Every work of God is for ever.' As for the notion of a literal, personal devil, it may be considered as a fearful illusion, arising out of the natural propensity of man to personify principles; and out of the erroneous views of the relation of the creature to the Creator, fostered and encouraged by priestly domination. 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,' not the end of it, which is 'love.' 'Perfect love casteth out fear;' and will, in due time, cast the devil out too, together with 'death and hell,' into the 'lake of fire.'—(Rev. xx., 14.) The Scripture devil is merely the personification of evil. That good and evil are both from the same source, is taught in almost every page of Scripture. Satan has an assigned place in heaven; he is described as standing at the right hand of God; among the sons of God (Job i., 6.) And one of his names is Lucifer, 'son of the morning,' an appellation which Christ himself appropriates: 'I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.' The word 'Satan' means simply *an adversary*: every thing must have its opponent, or devil. 'Good is set against evil, and life against death: so is the godly against the sinner, and the sinner against the godly.' 'All things are double, one against another;' and 'one thing establisheth the good of another.'—(Ecclesiasticus).

We will here give a few examples of the way in which a free mind may translate religious dogmas into scientific truths, and symbolical types into palpable and satisfactory realities.

The doctrine of the trinity, or three in one, was held long before the Christian era, and comprises many natural and eternal truths. All power may be said to be threefold—physical, intellectual, *moral*; everlastingly exhibiting itself in action—reaction—result,

in matter, mind, and spirit. Matter is divisible into mineral, animal, vegetable; it is also solid, liquid, gaseous: and yet these divisions sometimes so blend into each other that we cannot precisely say where one ends or the other begins; and all by turns take the same characteristics—a solid becoming a liquid, and a liquid a gas—the Father being transmuted into the Son, and the Son into the Spirit. In religious history, God the Father is typified in Judaism, God the Son in Christianity; and the new dispensation—the reign of the Comforter—the Holy Ghost—the Spirit of Truth—completes the analogical trio.

The Lord's Supper is another type which our clergy blindly mistake for the promised reality; and although Protestants do not admit the literal interpretation of the words of the text as to eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ, they are no nearer the truth than are the transubstantiationists. 'Except ye eat of the flesh of the son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you,' said Christ; and he afterwards explains his meaning thus:—'It is the *spirit* that quickeneth; the *flesh* profiteth nothing: the *words* that I speak unto you, they are *spirit*, and they are *life*.' And yet the greater part of Christendom believe they are eating and drinking the veritable body and blood of Christ when they swallow a little claret or a wafer from the hands of a priest! The Lord's Supper, properly understood, beautifully prefigures that social and friendly hospitality which will be practised when man has realized true liberty, equality, and fraternity; when sectarianism and pride and poverty and niggardly thrift are banished from the earth. Christ, as the great representative of universal humanity, knew that that happy period was far in the distance, and he thus spoke to his disciples (Matt. xxvi., 29):—'I will not henceforth drink of this fruit of the vine with you, until that day when I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom.' That kingdom is truth, peace, and righteousness—not the present one of lies, strife, and wickedness. But the priests ignore the text, lose sight of the symbolic character of the ordinance, and impiously pretend that their triune God is present with them every time they administer their favourite rite!

The ridiculous and profane controversy which has been recently carried on in our mock Christian church, as to whether the rite of baptism was, or was not, essential to the salvation of the souls of infants, was ably commented on by the editor of the *Family Herald*, who thus summed up the true meaning of the symbolical rite of baptism:—

'The founder of the church has said: "Unless a man be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." This is all their authority. Is this not enough? It is—but what is water? The materialist replies: "Every child, every fool, knows

what water is." Well, what is it? We ask again, What is water? "He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." What is it now, and what are the rivers? "He that drinketh of this water [common water] shall thirst again; but he that drinketh of the water that I shall give him, it shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." What is it now? . . . The Scriptures themselves explain what water is. "The words of the wise are as dark sayings, and the well-spring of wisdom a flowing stream." This is water; and without this water, or wisdom, certainly no man can be in heaven, for all men there are wise.—(*Family Herald*, August 17, 1850.)

From the preceding illustrations it will be perceived by the unprejudiced inquirer, whose mind is not darkened by ignorance or false teaching, and not cramped by a slavish bigotry, that the religion of the Bible (not that of the priests) when interpreted on rational and liberal principles, for which mode of interpretation we have the authority of the Book itself,* is a pure and consolatory

* The sacred oracles of other religions give the same liberty of interpretation. In the third chapter of the Koran we read:—"It is He who hath sent down unto thee this book, wherein are some verses clear to be understood; they are the foundation of the book; and others are parabolical. But they whose hearts are perverse will follow that which is parabolical therein out of a love of schism." According to Ram Mohun Roy, the *Véda*s of the Hindus make it 'optional with those who have faith in the only God to attend to the prescribed ceremonies or neglect them.' He states that the *Véda* says:—"He who has true faith in the Omnipresent Supreme Being, may eat all that exists; nor is he bound to inquire what is his food, or who prepares it"—a text directly at variance with the orthodox customs of the Hindus, whom the priests have made complete slaves to ceremonial observances, especially as regards their food and the mode of dressing and eating it. Their great law-giver Menu says, in the second chapter of the *Institutes*, that "When there are two texts apparently inconsistent, both are held to be law." "Thus in the *Véda* are these texts: "Let the sacrifices be when the sun has arisen;" and, "When neither sun nor stars can be seen;" the sacrifice therefore may be performed at any, or at all times.' The esoteric doctrine of the Buddhists is still more encouraging to human freedom of thought and action, teaching something tantamount to the belief that *man is God*; or, at any rate, that he can, by the force of his will, attain to divine perfection and power. Something like a similar belief may be gathered from the twenty-second chapter of Genesis, which recounts that Jacob wrestled with a man (who turned out to be God) for a whole night; and would have prevailed against him had not Jacob's

system—a system of real Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, in the most comprehensive and exalted sense of the words. Hope and consolation under the unavoidable afflictions of this life are everywhere opened to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. To the poor it is especially a gospel of glad tidings: everywhere a reconciliation to God is promised, even to the wicked; everywhere is compensation indicated for suffering humanity; everywhere is man incited to the most sublime aspirations, and the most exalted hopes of future happiness. Man is always encouraged to believe that there is nothing more glorious in the universe than himself. The ennobling assurance is given him that he has been made ‘in the image of God:’ that we are ‘the sons of God,’ and his ‘free-born’ children; that a man is ‘more precious than fine gold; even than the golden wedge of Ophir.’—(Is. xlii., 12.).

There is indeed nothing more wonderful in the universe than man; and we may, without presumption, assume that our Creator willed to confer upon us a divine nobility—to which high position we could have no claim were the laws of nature so ordered as to require none of our co-operation; for then man would have felt himself degraded into a mere machine; and that highest and most exhilarating of pleasures, the destruction of evil by our own efforts, would have been lost to us; and we should instinctively feel that we were nothing more than instruments in the hands of Providence, instead of self-willing, conscious, and responsible agents. Without a conviction of this responsibility—without a belief that the general amount of happiness or misery obtaining in society is mainly consequent upon the amount of truth, wisdom, and justice existing in man’s societary arrangements, man would become, at least theoretically, an inactive fatalist; and in a proportionate degree unfitted for this earth. And here we would observe that reason tells us that however much Providence may aid our efforts by direct interference, (and to deny the possibility of that would be to deny free-will to Deity) the positive assurance of such interference will be always veiled from us; because, were it otherwise, man would be too apt to rely upon Providential aid when it was not needed, and thereby neglect the due exercise of his own powers and faculties; besides losing the sublime consciousness of being a coadjutor with Deity in perfecting the universe. Let us hope, however, that man is, at last, ‘approaching the more complete fulfilment of that great and sacred mission which he has to perform in this world. His reason being created

thigh been put ‘out of joint’ by a trick. But Jacob got something by the struggle: he got the blessing of the Lord, and his name changed to Israel, which means a Prince of God. And truly man never gets anything worth having out of God or nature without struggling for it.

in the image of God, he has to use it to discover the laws by which the Almighty governs his creation; and, by making those laws his standard of action, to conquer nature to his will—himself a divine instrument.’—(*Speech of Prince Albert at the Mansion House, March 21, 1850*).

Religious authority is the highest of all authority; and however erroneous the religion may be, society could not hold together without it. A society composed of people who had no religious faith never did, and never could exist. The government, and even the clergy themselves, may be atheists and hypocrites, but the mass of the nation must entertain religious hopes and fears of some kind or other, or law and order could not be preserved among them. All governments are fully aware of the binding properties which even the *prestige* of religion exercises for the preservation of stability and order in society; and they have never neglected to make the church an instrument for their purposes in this respect. If a Louis Napoleon (or any similar tool in the interests of the middle and upper classes) in order to crush the rising spirit of liberty in the people, and without having the fear of God before his eyes, dares to trample upon the most solemn oaths; and if a vile, hireling priesthood is ready to attempt to justify his abominable treachery and perjury, yet both these powers, both state and church, most scrupulously seek to bind the people by *their* oaths; and, in so doing, tacitly pay homage to truth and virtue—tacitly acknowledge the reality of a soul and a conscience in man, and that there is such a thing as a sense of honour, and a belief in religious responsibility, although they themselves may be utterly devoid of these civilizing attributes, or may have consented to forego them for mammon, for ambition, or to preserve a brutal and dishonourable existence.

All great schemes for society reform, if they do not come through the medium of the church directly (which would doubtless be the quickest, safest, and most legitimate channel), must be sanctioned by the religious feelings of the people before they can permanently take root among them. Religion must be the basis of every social institution, or justice between man and man as individuals, or between men and men as members of society, cannot be practised; and the era of true liberty, equality, and fraternity, cannot commence, because the dominant religious sentiments of the people form the only principles by which justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity can be defined and tested.

Religious government is, then, the highest form of government. The church and state must become one; they must be morally united in love and affection, and not allowed to live together from motives of concupiscence and selfish expediency, before society can be thoroughly regenerated. ‘A theocracy,’ says the editor of the *Family Herald* (Jan. 4, 1851), ‘is the end of the

Jewish and Christian drama. The Romish church maintains that this theocracy has already commenced in its own communion. The canon law makes the Pope God upon earth, above all law, king of kings, lord of lords, with power to bind and loose, to open the gates of heaven and hell. Beyond the reign of a papal God on earth the Romanist cannot look. All that he expects is an extension of the system, and its universal prevalence. We have the sample of the Romish kingdom of God before our eyes in the desert city of Rome and its bachelor priests. There is nothing more to hope for but its enlargement. Protestants, in general, expect little better; for they look only to the increase of non-communing establishments, the dissemination of dissent—church separated from state and politics divorced from religion; in all which anticipations the main features of the Christian revelation are entirely forgotten, for these regard as indispensable the reunion of the two churches of Jew and Gentile, the revival of the law, and its final fulfilment and glorification. There is no philosophy more satisfactory than this—no popery, no prelacy, no presbyterianism, no congregationalism. It is, even as a theory, most magnificent, most simple and dramatic, most classical, most agreeable to reason and to human feelings. Strange that it should be so little regarded, and so little heard of. Is it because men love chaos and disorder better than method? Is it because they have not faith enough in God to believe he will do it? Yet how beautiful the whole drama seems with such a *denouement*—with mercy in triumph interpreting judgment at last in favour of the accused, and reconciling all contrarieties and satisfying all understandings by expounding the riddle of good and evil, and laying the final responsibility of all things on the shoulders of Him who is well able to bear it. For God hath created all things for himself, and there is no evil in existence which will ever be permitted to leave a permanent stain upon his character, or justify a single creature in permanently regretting that he was ever brought into being. *The end must be glorious, because the Creator is glorious.*

The setting apart a portion of the people, and forming them into a distinct class, or priesthood, and giving them powers and authorities more or less independent of the people, and even of the state; and further to endow them with the presumed capacity of being our mediators with Deity, is a folly and an error of an analogous character to that of creating kings and external governments in the belief that under their iron rule alone can society be kept together; and is destined to be as duly exploded when man shall become a reasoning animal, and not remain, as now, in the category of an animal capable of reasoning, but who never exercises the faculty beyond the petty sphere of his own individuality. The church and state, as at present constituted, or, rather, *priestcraft* and *kingcraft*, are doubtless the two beasts

spoken of in the Revelations—the one tyrannizing over our opinions, the other over our property. The beau-ideal of society is that of every man being his own king, and his own priest; and the nearer we approach that ideal perfection, the happier will mankind become; and the more dignified will be the aspect of its affairs. Not, however, till the human intellect is freed from the despotism of schools, colleges, and universities—which dooms it to a wearisome, mill-horse track, wasting its energies, as the poor creatures in our gaols are often condemned to do in ‘grinding the air’—will society be placed upon the right path towards liberty, truth, justice, prosperity, and happiness. Alas! it makes one sad to reflect upon the vast amount of thought and mind which is dissipated every day and every hour upon researches, acquirements, and literary frivolities, which have no relation whatever to the well-being of humanity. Such studies may serve to amuse, to while away the time, or to gratify a childish curiosity; but they do nothing to teach man his rights or his duties, either to God or his fellows. They do nothing to rid the world of poverty, and its natural concomitants, sin and misery; they bind up no broken hearts; they wipe away no tears from the eyes of suffering millions. They serve neither to ‘mend the life,’ nor ‘guide the heart,’ but rather to bewilder and emasculate the minds, and pervert the sympathies of all who are exposed to their influence, leaving them, like the Ephesians of old, for ever ‘learning, and yet never able to come to a knowledge of the truth;’ for ever ‘darkening counsel by words without knowledge;’ for ever ‘vexing themselves with vain and unprofitable questions.’

But, out of evil comes good; and, as the *Shepherd* remarks (vol. iii., p. 211):—‘The dispensations of Providence in the history of mankind constitute a connected series of training for the formation of human character, ending in the establishment of a system of universal justice, foreseen and foreshewn in mysterious language by divine commissioners from the beginning in all ages, but more especially by Moses and Christ, whose successive systems, instituted by an extraordinary manifestation of power, have afforded all the experience necessary to enable mankind to reconstitute society upon equitable principles, and unite the Gentile and the Jew in one great family.’

CHAPTER IV.

OF THE SOCIAL, INDUSTRIAL, AND COMMERCIAL DEPARTMENTS.

IN the preceding chapters we have endeavoured to condense a few of the leading principles of good government, and true religion and morality; and to show the mutual dependence of these sciences upon each other, in their progress towards an ideal perfectibility. To ascertain what is just and true in politics and religion, and to apply that knowledge to practice, should be the interest as well as the duty of every individual. But on so false a basis is society now constructed, that many who know the truth, and who feel a desire to obey the instinctive dictates of conscience in following it, are often compelled to act as if they repudiated it, because they feel that, as truth is not perceived through the mist of false morality, and false knowledge which darkens and bewilders the perceptions of the majority of their fellows, their motives and actions would be misconstrued and misunderstood. Viewed through these distorting mediums, truth is transformed into falsehood, justice into injustice, honour into dishonour, and virtue into vice. A love of honest independence and a feeling of self-respect are called pride and audacity; and a hatred of tyranny, superstition, and social slavery is set down as anarchy, atheism, and 'dangerous doctrine.' Hypocrisy, equivocation, lying, and the temporary expedient of compromise, are therefore necessarily cultivated in society; and men study to appear what they are not, and speak and write what they neither feel nor believe. Thus a most complex scheme of social laws, regulations, and conventional rules is elaborated, and is, in fact, required to prevent society from falling to pieces by reason of its inherent rottenness and corruption. And thus also, no unity of opinion is arrived at upon any great societary question, because such questions can never be fairly discussed, and reasoned out, in a state of society where men are afraid of the truth, and where every man suspects the motives and questions the earnestness of his fellow man. Hence there is no universality of agreement in the minds of the people as to what reforms are necessary in society, however unanimous may be their opinion that society is in a most unsatisfactory state, and that *something* ought to be done to rectify it.

As an indispensable preliminary to *action* we require some touchstone by which all reformatory schemes and plans may be tested—some solvent by which the true, the just, and the beautiful may be at once separated from their worthless and vicious counterfeits. And what test, as we have before remarked, shall

we find better than the Christian doctrines of liberty, equality, and fraternity? We have only to submit all laws, institutions, customs, and manners, and all schemes for the improvement of the social machine, to this question:—"Do they, or can they, realize in practice true liberty, equality, and fraternity for the universal man?" And if the question cannot be answered in the affirmative, we may be assured that our institutions are wrong, and that our pseudo-reformers and regenerators are not wise enough to remodel or rebuild them. And until they can be remodelled or rebuilt, wisely, we had better either leave them as they are, or mend them very gingerly; just as an old, worn-out, ill-constructed house is better than no shelter at all, and might become less habitable, or tumble about our ears, if its repair be entrusted to injudicious heads, or unskilful hands.

The division of society into three classes—the higher, middle, and lower—is necessarily destructive of all real liberty, equality, and fraternity among the people; and if the higher class makes any approach thereto, it is at the expense of the other classes, by rigidly excluding them from their society, and acknowledging them only as useful panders to the luxury of the rich. It would be in vain to expect more than the pretence of an acquiescence in the Christian sentiment that 'all men are brethren' to exist with this system of class, or rather caste, distinction. It would be in vain, also, to look for any high development of moral, intellectual, or even physical character in a society so organised; or to expect that public spirit will often rise above the influences of private interest. Those beautiful sympathies of humanity which, as our great poet says, 'make the whole world kin,' are gradually undermined, if not obliterated from the hearts of men; and a perpetual antagonism prevails between one class and another. The *hauteurs* of the aristocracy, and their tenacious grasp of state power, excite the malice and envy of the middle class; and the unprivileged and poverty-stricken proletarians, finding their condition get worse and worse, begin, very naturally, to look upon both classes as their enemies and oppressors. To designate such a state of things 'society' is an ironical misnomer. Society should mean a congregation of individuals living together in the belief that, as a whole, they would afford to each other a reciprocity of at least negative advantages; but the present aggregations of men are more like those which gamblers produce when they meet together in order to rob, cheat, and exploit each other. This is barbarism, and not civilisation. The mass of the people are struggling for their very lives; the only rule of conduct they can practise is that of 'self-preservation' being the first 'law of nature;' and the absolute necessity of rigorously following up this rule of conduct is universally admitted, if not deplored. How to exist from day to day, or from month to month, engrosses all their thoughts; and they have neither time, capacity, nor inclination, to study

the causes of social evils, or to understand the remedies for them. Indeed, the majority of the population are sunk so low as either not to be sensible of their degradation, or to conclude that their condition is past human remedy; and the philanthropist who strives to elevate them into a proper appreciation of freedom or the true dignity of man, too often finds that all the sacrifices he may have made for that end meet with nothing but the freezing ingratitude, perhaps the ridicule and contempt, of those he wishes to benefit:—

————— ‘ This the rich reward
Of virtue battling to be seen and heard :
To reap a harvest of neglect and tears,
Giving sweet counsel to unwilling ears ;
And see yourself in sable sorrow clad,
And called by caitiffs, like poor Quixote, mad.’

Can it be wondered at, that the question should sometimes be asked, How can you make free men of people who have no desire to be free, or who know not that they are slaves—perchance the slaves of slaves’ slaves ?

That society is broken up into hostile classes, having few or no interests in common with each other, is mainly consequent upon two radical evils—namely, the institution of private property in land, and the persistence in the use of gold and silver as money—currency—that is, allowing scarce and costly metals to *represent* wealth, as well as to *measure* its conventional value, however disproportionate may be the rate of increase between the production of real wealth and the production of those metals.* The first

* The recent gold discoveries are beginning to work great consternation among money-mongers, annuitants, and all those living on fixed incomes. Some people profess to believe that no great perturbation in the value of money will after all take place; but if, as is quite certain, the purchasing power of the sovereign has increased, in respect of many articles of consumption, at least 50 per cent. during the last 30 years, mainly because wealth and population have increased faster than gold, surely it must happen that, when gold becomes rapidly augmented, its purchasing power must decrease in the same proportion? Of course this will tell against the interests of the non-producing classes, and no doubt they are seriously meditating some means of ‘adjustment,’ to save themselves from loss. But when any other class-interest has suffered from depreciated prices, have they exhibited any readiness for ‘adjustment?’ Probably they will endeavour to make silver the standard of value, or to alter the value of the pound sterling; but we trust the other interests will not permit either to be done.

evil naturally breeds aristocrats, landlords, and hereditary statesmen; and fosters that pride of birth which leads an aristocrat to look upon every individual not a member of his own artificial clique as a being belonging to an inferior race of animals. The second, has as naturally fostered a cormorant middle class, composed of usurers, profit-mongers, the tools, agents, and panderers of the aristocracy, and the grinding, grasping tyrants of the poor—a class, in fact, who, by their position, are made regardless of everything but ‘*buying cheap and selling dear.*’

These two classes having gradually absorbed all the land and money of the country—having usurped all legislative, political, municipal, parochial, and ecclesiastical power—the mass of the people are left with no other resources for subsistence than to let themselves out as the wages-slaves of the upper and middle classes; to do all the hard, dirty, unwholesome, and hazardous labour of society; to become soldiers, sailors, and thief-catchers to protect the property of their taskmasters; or to live the degraded and miserable lives of robbers, beggars, paupers, prostitutes, vagabonds, and impostors. These are their only alternatives, except one which, luckily for their oppressors, they have been too far debased by slavery to have contemplated seriously, and that is—a *forcible retaking of their natural rights and liberties.*

The longer and the more tenaciously a nation carries on this nefarious system, the more virulently diseased must society become; and the British Isles at this moment furnish the philosopher and the philanthropist with the saddest proofs of the miseries which bad government, land monopoly, usury, and profit-mongering can heap upon a people. If he turn his eyes to the nations of the continent of Europe, the same cheerless results are everywhere apparent. The poor in many parts of Germany are now being decimated by actual famine, chiefly, as the newspapers inform us, through the failure of the potato—a vegetable which ought never to be used but as an auxiliary to good meat. In Berlin and Vienna the poor are encouraged to eat horse flesh, which the government allows to be publicly sold in the markets, as befitting food for those whose toil produces all the luxuries of the rich! Nor must we ever forget that in Ireland, in 1847, no fewer than 2,900,000 people were for some time supported by daily rations at the cost of the state.

We will leave the newspapers, the police reporters, the criminal annalists, the novelists—the Osbornes, the Douglas Jerrolds, the Dickenses, and the Mayhews—to pourtray the sickening details of the condition of the people. Every day they are doing it, and the more disgusting their disclosures are, the less effect they seem to have upon the seared consciences of the rich, or the blunted sensibilities of the poor victims themselves.

We will also leave the remedies proposed for these miseries, by our self-constituted statesmen, to be discussed elsewhere, merely entering our protest against them all. Not one of them has yet had the courage, the honesty, or the wisdom to denounce the true causes of social evils, and cannot, therefore, be expected to propound remedies. Some gravely propose to take *nothing* from the rich and give it to the poor! One eccentric demagogue wanted to make the poor rich, and the rich richer, as if the latter were necessary! Another party says, provide profitable and safe modes of investment for the savings of the industrious and frugal, by penny banks, annuities, associative companies, &c.—as if usury and profit-mongering can ever permanently enrich a nation, or do anything further than make the poor poorer by exacting more and more of their labour in order to pay those new annuitants and profitists—labour being the only source from which all payments can be derived, whether in money or meal. Louis Blanc says he wants a state of society 'in which the distribution of labour, and the sharing of its fruits, would be based on the principle, even now recognized in families—from each, according to his faculties; to each, according to his wants;' thereby most injudiciously overlooking the fact that the hope of individual reward is the most natural incentive to labour; and that the restriction of each individual's consumption to his capacity to give an equivalent for it, is the safest barrier against idleness and luxury.* Another party tells the superfluous hands to emigrate—that is, to become the wages-slaves of landlords and capitalists in other countries where exactly the same system is carried on as here. Another dwells unctiously on the blessings that would accrue from new churches and more parsons, which is literally

* The amount of injury done to the popular cause by the crude theories of the Communists, and the attempts to put them in practice, is incalculable. The failure of the French Revolution of 1848 is mainly to be attributed to the wild schemes for 'organizing labour,' and making the state the employers of the people. No wonder that capitalists and tradesmen commenced to plot against a government which could harbour such ideas. No wonder that skilled artisans refused to give their assent to plans which reduced them to a level with the unskilled, and rewarded both alike! Communism, in fact, could exist only by the negation of that most beautiful of human characteristics—individuality; and no real lover of freedom will ever be content to merge his own will into that of a group or community, merely to be made a machine for the creation and distribution of wealth—without having more discretionary power allowed him than a common soldier has. Such a state of being would be a kind of social papacy, and would have equally paralyzing effects upon the human character as religious papacy has.

offering the people stocks and stones instead of bread. But, alas, none of them see, or have the courage to acknowledge, that *landlordism*, *profit-mongering*, and *usury*, are the principal causes not only of social evils, but of the greater part of the physical, moral, and intellectual evils that have afflicted mankind in all ages and in all countries.

The evil effects of land-monopoly were partially foreseen by Moses and other ancient law-givers; nor have they been altogether overlooked by philanthropists and reformers of modern times. A celebrated Frenchman said that the man who first put his sacrilegious foot upon a spot of earth and called it his property, ought to have been struck dead instantaneously. Thomas Paine remarked:—'There could be no such thing as landed property originally. Man did not make the earth; and though he had a natural right to occupy it, he had no right to locate, as his property in perpetuity, any part of it; neither did the Creator of the earth open a land office from whence the first title-deeds should issue.' Spence said that the land was 'the peoples' farm.' A Mons. Arndt, of Bonn, in 1815, published his opinion that land should not be allowed to be sold like personal property; and that the peasant and small landed proprietor should, whenever it were possible, hold his land immediately of the state, and thereby be saved from becoming a wages-slave. He considered that one half of the land of every country should be held in that way. In New York there now exists a large body called 'the free soil party,' who want an equal division of the land among the existing population—a scheme, however, which would be manifestly unjust towards their posterity. In England, more recently, several writers have advocated the nationalization of land. The celebrated orator, George Dawson, has emphatically denounced private property in land as unjust and unchristian. F. W. Newman, in his 'Lectures on Political Economy,' laments that the public revenue is not derived from state land; and, although he, apparently, does not see how old England could revert to that healthful practice, still, he says, 'One might have hoped that in the regulations for new Colonies, some kind of foresight might have been exercised to have saved them from falling into the same wastefulness as ourselves. The colonial land is avowedly a state possession: to grant it away to individuals, from favour, is now at length repudiated as public profligacy; but to *sell* it is thought to be the part of prudent statesmanship. What? To sell, for the immediate convenience of this our generation, what ought to be a perpetual resource of revenue in future centuries? . . . Our practice of selling alienates to individuals for ever, and for an insignificant sum paid down, the permanent heritage of a great nation.'

But all these writers are more or less defective in principle or detail, and especially in not combining other radical reforms of

nearly equal importance with agrarian reform. To one man alone,* JAMES BRONTERRE O'BRIEN, is the world indebted for a comprehensive, consistent, just, and practical scheme of social and political reformation, based upon the natural and indefeasible rights of man, and including the nationalization of land as the first principle of social justice, and the most legitimate source of public revenue.

Mr. O'Brien's language is so lucid and graphic, that we cannot do better than quote *verbatim* some of his expositions of the false principles of the present state of society, and of the true ones by which they might be superseded.

In addressing the friends of 'national reform' (that is, not party reform) in a periodical called *The Power of the Pence*, dated the 21st April, 1849, these passages occur:—

'To make a just and legal revolution in England has been the object of my life. To accomplish it, or help in accomplishing it, I have sacrificed all that a man cares to live for in this world. I consider a revolution in England to be a revolution all over the world. If the power of the landlord and the money-lord be but destroyed in England, it can maintain itself nowhere else on the earth; if it cannot be destroyed in England, millions of the human race must perish throughout Europe and elsewhere before the nations can be emancipated. The power of England is the most terrific power *for evil*† that was ever known in the world. The power of the old Roman Empire was nothing to it. This was a mere military power, founded upon brute force, which a greater force might at any time subvert, and which a greater and more barbaric force did ultimately destroy. The same might have been predicated of the power of Alexander, of Ghengis

* Let not this be considered as an undue attribution of genius or talent to a single individual. How often, as Ruskin remarks, does history show us, that when anything great is needed to be done for society, there is only one man on the earth that can do it!

† For good also, if wisely directed. No nation possesses greater powers than England for regenerating the human race. The spread of her people throughout the earth—the universality of her language and commerce—the elastic character of her institutions—her immense wealth and territorial possessions—and even the influence of her very name—give her facilities for inaugurating the reign of truth, justice, and liberty in the world which no other people appear to possess. If England cannot do it, no other nation can. What an awful responsibility, then, rests upon our rulers!

Khan, of Tamerlane, of the Caliphs who succeeded to Mahomet's empire, of Napoleon—of any and all other conquering powers. But the power of England is altogether a different sort of power. Unlike the power of the conquerors alluded to, it does not depend upon mere brute force. It is a moral, or rather an immoral power, based upon false principles of political economy, which appeals almost irresistibly to man's inherent selfishness—principles which give to England, as her natural allies, the tyrants, cheats, and oppressors of all nations, and which are of so insidious and diabolical a nature that the very slaves who writhe under their development are unconsciously enlisted in their support, and thereby unwittingly made parties to their own oppression.

' Upon these false principles is raised the whole superstructure of our landed, commercial, and political systems, together with the system of private property they give rise to and protect. They are, as you will see upon examination, gross perversions of natural justice; which in their very nature cannot do otherwise than produce misery and slavery to the great mass of the people who live under them, or who come, in any way, within the range of their influence.

' What are those false principles? Investigate them, as I have done, and you will find that however numerous and diversified, they are all resolvable into false principles in respect of the laws and institutions which should regulate *Land, Credit, Currency, and Exchange*. Thus, it is assumed that land, mines, rivers, &c., are fit and proper subjects of private property, like bales of cloth, pottery wares, or any other product of man's skill and industry; and that, accordingly, the works of God's creation may be bought and sold in the market, the same as if they were the works of human hands. This is a principle so utterly abhorrent to common sense and reason—it is, on the face of it, so gross a perversion of natural justice, that the rights of property cannot possibly be reconciled with it, nor coexist a moment in presence of it. Once allow the soil of a country, which God made for all its inhabitants, and for all generations born upon it, to be bought up, or otherwise monopolized, or usurped by any particular section of any one generation (be that section large or small*), and that moment your community is divided into tyrants and slaves; into knaves who will work for nobody, and into drudges who will have

* It is computed that if all the cultivable land of Great Britain and Ireland were divided among the adult males, there would not be more than ten acres to each. So that if such a system of 'agrarian justice' were carried out, the land would soon become subdivided into mere patches: a result which would create more evil than the present monopoly of the soil in the hands of a few.

to work for anybody or everybody but themselves. No subsequent legislation—no possible tinkering or patchwork in the way of remedial measures can sensibly affect a system based upon so hideous a foundation. You may talk of forms of government, or of reforms of parliament, but I hesitate not to say that no reform of parliament, no reconstruction of the government can be of the slightest avail towards amelioration whilst that glaring and gigantic injustice constitutes the basis of private property; and for this simple reason, because the rights of labour, and the rights of property, which ought to be really one and the same, are utterly irreconcilable under such a system. As long therefore as it shall prevail, so long must the rich be insecure, and the mass miserable, whatever may be the form of the government, from monarchy to democracy the most pure and unlimited.

‘Another false principle at the root of our politico-commercial system is, that credit should exist only for the rich,* and not at all for the poor. This is a most atrocious principle, both in theory and practice. As between citizen and citizen, or between subject and subject, the principle might be defensible enough on prudential grounds. But as between the citizen and his country it is wholly unjustifiable, and calculated to keep subordinates subordinate, and to fatten tyrants and usurers with the sweat and blood of slaves. If the rents of the country were public property, as they ought to be, no honest, industrious man should be refused a temporary advance or loan from them for productive purposes; and it is not in the power of man to conceive a better security for the repayment of the same than the skilled labour of an industrious, sober freeman, protected by laws made with his own consent. There is no other security *now* for the repayment of loans, public or private, than the known capacity of working men to produce a surplus over and above their own consumption. If they could not, or did not, do this, there would be no interest for fundholders, mortgagees, or money-lenders of any sort. Indeed, there is no other source than the said surplus for the payments of

* It is not generally known that, within these few years, Acts have been passed enabling the Treasury to make advances to the amount of £4,000,000, for the improvement of land in Great Britain, by drainage, etc. The Inclosure Commissioners were appointed to manage these advances, and, no doubt, they have ‘managed’ them very nicely for some people. We find that the Earl of Essex has had no less than £6,000 advanced to him; Sir E. B. Lytton, £3,000; the Duke of Manchester, £4,910; the Rev. Lord C. Harvey, £950; etc., etc. But where is the poor man to get an advance, except at the usurious pawnbroker’s? And then he must deposit something of far greater value than *the loan he gets*.

rents, taxes, dividends, premiums on insurance policies, and the interest of upwards of two thousand millions of private debts. Out of the same source, and no other, comes also the enormous income annually received by capitalists and traders, under the name of profits. Yes, the whole and sole security for all is—the labourer's capability to produce a surplus over and above what he consumes during the period of production. It were strange, then—passing strange, indeed—if that surplus, which is now sufficient security for everybody else, should not be as good a security for himself, when the very object of the advance or loan was neither more nor less than to furnish him with the means of repayment, by at once enabling him to produce, and by making him the master of his own products. Yet, in the teeth of this well-known capability on his part, the man whose surplus productions enable others to get loans, and repay both capital and interest, is the only man who can get no loan for himself, because, by our atrocious system, the credit as well as the land of the country is hermetically sealed against him.

‘ Another false principle at the root of our system is, that *money*, or the *medium of exchange*, should be itself a thing of intrinsic value. There never was a principle more preposterously absurd in theory, nor more diabolically mischievous in practice, than this principle. Even a boy, or a child of ten years old, who has only seen a party at cards losing or winning scores of shillings or pounds, whilst only bits of bone or wood passed from player to player (these counters having had a certain conventional value previously assigned to them), could see the absurdity of supposing it necessary that money should have intrinsic value. Still more would he see its absurdity if he saw the players suddenly brought to a stand-still by a new law making it illegal to play for gain, unless they used diamonds, pearls, or some other costly and uncome-at-able substances, for counters. The veriest tyro in political economy knows that the real value of any article or commodity is measured by the labour expended in procuring and manufacturing the raw material. This value he knows can be as well expressed upon a piece of paper as upon a piece of gold—the former being as easily, or more easily, stamped for the purpose than the latter. So long as either symbol is required only for transferring from hand to hand a claim in the wealth it represents, and is equally competent to discharge that function, one is just as good as the other. Neither symbol is wanted *for its own sake*. It is only wanted for the sake of what it represents, and has been issued upon. The only real ground of preference, then, that can attach to one symbol over the other, is the greater facility of obtaining and applying it to the purposes required. In respect of the paper symbol, this facility is so obvious, so acknowledged, that none but an idiot would dispute it. In respect of the gold symbol, the case is altogether different. To procure gold, there

to be an expenditure of labour equal to what is required to produce the equivalents it exchanges for; and besides the absurdity of such misplacement, because wholly useless, labour, it is manifestly ridiculous to suppose that any one commodity (more especially an exceedingly scarce one, like gold) can ever be obtained in sufficient abundance to represent adequately all other commodities, which may be produced *ad libitum*, to any extent decided by consumption, and which, without the intervention of gold at all, might be interchanged from hand to hand, in a single week, to an amount equal to fifty times the value of the gold in the country. It is like supposing a part of a thing to be equal to the whole. Gold, in the same way, may be a good measure of value, and, as such, is perfectly unobjectionable. But as an exclusive representation of value, or as the sole basis of representation (which our present laws have virtually made it, by constituting it the sole basis of our circulating medium), it is unfit for a productive and trading population what a single blanket or a single suit of clothes would be, applied to the use of a whole family, consisting of divers persons of all ages and sizes. The greatest and most important members of the political family get the best share of the blanket—the others get the least, and some none at all. As well might the garments of a dwarf be expected to fit a giant; as well might our legislators attempt to reduce a full grown bird to the egg whence it was hatched, as to attempt to tie down the population and commerce of this great country to the Procrustean bed of Peel's monetary system, as abolished by his laws of 1819 and 1844. That system alone, without there no other causes in operation, *must, sooner or later, produce a convulsion in this country, if it be not speedily unmade by a wiser and better men than its authors.* To pretend that the laws of property exist in a country where such a monetary system coexists with private ownership of the soil,* is a monstrous

Perhaps the most extortionate system of legal robbery, in connection with private property in the soil, is found in what are called *ground rentals*. By virtue of this system, an individual like the Marquis of Westminster is enabled to realize an income greater than the Queen gets for her services (she does something for her money, but the marquis does absolutely nothing for his), merely because the land on which certain houses are built are *said*, by a fiction in law, to belong to him. After a certain number of years, the houses themselves become his property; and he forthwith proceeds to grant fresh leases of them at increased rents, especially if the occupants have made any improvements. Nor is any lease granted without the payment of a heavy 'fine,' as well as a 'fee' to know the terms. An occupier of a small house in Oxford Street was recently fined £3 16s. for being made acquainted with the landlord's

perversion of language. It is not the rights of property, but the wrongs of robbery, that these land and money laws tend to conserve.

‘Another false principle at the root of our system (mark it well! for it is a most diabolical one) is, that laws may legitimately *make* property for one set of people at the expense of another set, without consent, and without equivalent. This principle lurks insidiously at the root of scores of different sorts of property, well known to exist in this country, and to be wholly and solely the offspring of class legislation. The dividends payable on the National Debt are of this class of property; so are railway dividends; so are the dividends or revenues accruing from canals, docks, wharfs, fisheries, insurance offices, gas companies, water companies, mining companies, and private companies of all sorts, which are chartered by private Acts of Parliament to do for the public what the public ought to be empowered to do for themselves. There is no subject upon which more gross and general ignorance prevails than upon this. Most people imagine that a man may as legitimately possess property of the kinds here alluded to, as he may possess a house, a horse, or a gross of Birmingham buttons. No delusion can be more ridiculous. Parliaments are chosen, and laws are designed, not to *make* property for people, but to *protect* it for those who have made it for themselves, or obtained it from those that *did*. If a man builds a house, or buys an ox, it is his rightful property, irrespectively of Acts of Parliament. The law did not give him the house or the ox: neither has it a right to take it away, unless for a good and sufficient reason, and then only upon awarding adequate compensation. The same principle applies to every other legitimate description of property. All such legitimate descriptions of property are acquired or made by the owners themselves, and not by the law. The law only *protects* such property; it does not *create* or *make* it. But does this apply to the National Debt? Could such a form of property as the *three*

stipulations. They were these: he might pay £400 as a fine, build a new house worth £1,000 on the site of the old one, and pay an annual ground rent of £80; or he might pay £200 as a fine, build a house as above stated, and pay £120 a year as ground rent!—the house, of course, to become the property of the ground landlord after a certain number of years—under 70, we believe. From these and other causes, the house rents of London have more than doubled within the last 50 years.

* The state plan of borrowing money from its subjects on the perpetual interest system is replete with folly and extravagance; unless it be admitted to be an artful scheme for robbing the *wealth-producers*, by taxing them with the payment of the *interest of money* which they never borrowed. An honest

per cents. exist otherwise than by law? Assuredly not. It is the law, and the law only, that could call such *property* into existence. It is easy to exclaim, "Oh, the public creditor lent his money to the Government, and he has, therefore, a right to principal and interest at the expense of the public." The answer is, no Government has, nor ever could have, any just right to mortgage the labour of people for the payment of debts contracted by them, which they derived no benefit from, and which they have no assets to meet. The law does not make a man pay his father's debts, if the father has left him no assets. Neither should it make him pay the debts borrowed by a government for the protection of property in which he had no share. If the owners of realized property chose to contract liabilities of that sort, they ought, in honesty, to discharge them out of their property. But to make men without any assets beyond the fruits of their daily toil, responsible for such debts, is spoliation on the face of it. The poor man, as well as the rich man, ought to pay his quota of taxation for necessary government expenses, because the government is made for the protection of all; but to make him pay interest on debts contracted by other people for the protection of their property, is sheer robbery. Every penny extracted from him in that way is plunder. The law is the thief, and the fundholder but a receiver of stolen goods at his expense. The fundholder, if he has any claim at all, can have it only on the owners of realized property, upon whose estates, as Lord Brougham tells us, the debt is in the nature of a *bond fide* mortgage. Let them, therefore, and them only, be saddled with the payment. Any other way of meeting the liability is only robbing one class of men to make property for another class. Indeed, in a well-constituted state, public debts would not be suffered to exist at all; for, after all, the funding system, like our landed system, is only a contrivance for enabling idle knaves to grow rich and fat on the labours of others, to whom they yield no equivalent.

‘What is true of funded property, is equally applicable to the various other descriptions of property referred to. Railroads should not be private property; neither should canals, docks, fisheries, mines, the supplying of gas, water, etc. Works of this sort, designed for the use of the public, should be constructed or

government would quickly set about paying this debt off by offering life annuities to a certain number of stock-holders every year. A real state power ought never to *borrow* money—it ought to *make* it when required to cancel its obligations; receiving the same money back in the form of taxes, so as to prevent depreciation. The government practice of borrowing money on exchequer bills is also absurdly wasteful. Surely the credit of the state ought to be above that of any of its subjects?

executed only at the public cost, and the public, and the public only, should have the advantages. They should not be suffered to fall into the hands of private speculators, for whom they are only a legal disguise to enable them to rob the public. A universal-suffrage parliament would never sanction such a system, unless it was stark mad. Like the funding system, it only tends to breed idle schemers to prey upon the industrious classes. All profits upon their outlay received by such private companies (while they preserve their capital intact) is, in reality, so much public plunder handed over to them by the law. Indeed, not unfrequently the profits for a single year are greater than the outlay itself, whilst the original shares are proportionately enhanced in value. Thus, shares in the New River Company, originally worth £100, are now worth £16,000. In other words, the annual interest is equal to eight times the original capital. It is superfluous to say such *property* is the sole creation of law, which, whenever it deviates from its original function of *protecting* property to that of *creating* or *making* it, only robs one set of people to enrich another—a species of act which laws are intended to punish, and not to set the example of.

‘ Another false principle at the root of the system—perhaps the worst of all—is that property should legislate for labour, but not labour for property. Upon this principle is based all those property qualifications through which nine-tenths of the people are robbed of their electoral rights. Were property acquirable in this country only by honest means, the rights of property would be so identified with those of labour, that it would matter little, perhaps, whether there was any property qualification or not attached to the electoral franchise. But when we look to our land and money-laws—when we see the works of God, (the land, the rivers, and the very bowels of the earth, with all their mineral and fossil wealth) made by law, private property, and when we reflect that without the use of land, and the raw materials above and below its surface, no wealth at all can be produced, we shall see at once what a frightful principle it is to allow *property* to legislate for *labour* and *poverty*. It is making a man poor, by robbing him of all means of exercising his industry on his own account, and then punishing and degrading him for his poverty, by branding him with disqualification for the rights of citizenship. It is needless to describe such a system; it speaks for itself. It proclaims its own true character by the hunger, the rage, the misery and broken hearts it has spread over the length and breadth of the land.

‘ Another false principle at the foundation of our system is that education is made matter of *accident*, or of *charity*, and not matter of *right*. According to this barbarous principle, the child of *ignorant*, *drunken*, or *profligate* parents should suffer for their

ns, by growing up as ignorant as themselves, and mayhap to in a similar career of want, vice, and woe. Our very instincts, say nothing of Christianity and justice, revolt at the folly and wickedness of such a principle. Bad enough for the poor child to see the advantages which a thrifty and provident parent might have provided for him wherewith to start him fair in the world. To superadd to these the disadvantages of ignorance, through the neglect of the legislature and the church, is cruelty refined. When we reflect on the long odds which the educated youth has over the neglected one in the arduous race of life, and the greater abilities to vice and crime to which the latter is exposed, we cannot but be sensible of the injustice of refusing to extend the law's fostering care and protection in early life to him for whose short-comings and offences it makes no allowance in after life. Besides, if all are to be equally amenable and responsible to law, the law should, in justice, see that all are, at least, sufficiently educated to know what the law is, and what duties it expects from them. The want of a sound system of national education is unquestionably one of the worst defects of our social state.

'I might go on enlarging upon the false principles upon which almost every part of our social system is based; but I think, my friends, I have said enough to convince you how utterly hopeless it is to think of extricating the country from its difficulties without a fundamental change in the character of our institutions. And think not that a mere extension of the suffrage, or change in the form of government, will effect this. Believe me, it will not, unless accompanied with the sort of social reforms I have indicated in this letter, more especially those which relate to our *land and money laws*. Without these reforms, universal suffrage (however just and right in itself) might only involve us in troubles greater than you have any conception of. It might (as it has in many parts of the Continent) only bring destruction upon us, by alarming the guilty consciences of the rich, and inducing them to bribe and infuriate one portion of the working classes to destroy the other. Remember, an ignorant people can make no reforms for themselves. They can destroy, but they cannot build up. The latter function is that of intelligence only: *and how are the people to find the requisite men and the requisite intelligence, if they be not taught differently from what they have hitherto been?*

In a document which was circulated, in 1849, by a society of reformers called 'The National Reform League,'* of which Mr. O'Brien is the President, we find the following comprehensive

* Office, Eclectic Institute, Denmark Street, Soho, where Mr. O'Brien lectures every Friday and Sunday evening, on moral, social, political, religious, and historical subjects.

propositions, embodying the foregoing principles in a condensed form, together with an outline of the preliminary measures necessary to establish them, and thereby produce a peaceful regeneration of society:—

‘1. A repeal of our present wasteful and degrading system of poor-laws, and the substitution of a just and efficient poor-law (based upon the original Act of Elizabeth) which should centralise the rates, and dispense them equitably and economically for the beneficial employment and relief of the destitute poor. The rates to be levied only upon the owners of every description of realized property. The employment to be of a healthy, useful, and reproductive kind, so as to render the poor self-sustaining and self-respecting. Till such employment be procured, the relief of the poor to be, in all cases, promptly and liberally administered, as a right, and not grudgingly doled out, as a boon. The relief not to be accompanied with obduracy, insult, imprisonment in the workhouses, separation of married couples, the breaking up of families, or any such other harsh and degrading conditions as, under the present system, convert relief into punishment, and treat the unhappy applicant rather as a convicted criminal than as (what he really is) the victim of an unjust and vitiated state of society.

‘2. In order to lighten the pressure of rates, and, at the same time, gradually to diminish, and finally to absorb, the growing mass of pauperism and surplus population, it is the duty of the Government to appropriate its present surplus revenue, and the proceeds of national or public property, to the purchasing of lands and the location thereon of the unemployed poor. The rents accruing from these lands to be applied to further purchases of land, till all who desired to occupy land, either as individual holders of industrial communities, might be enabled to do so. A general law empowering parishes to raise loans upon the security of their rates, would greatly facilitate and expedite the operations of Government towards this desirable end.

‘3. Pending the operation of these measures, it is desirable to mitigate the burdens of taxation and of public and private indebtedness upon all classes who suffer thereby—the more especially as these burdens have been vastly aggravated by the recent monetary and free-trade measures of Sir Robert Peel. To this end, the Public Debt and all private indebtedness affected by the fall of prices should be equitably adjusted in favour of the debtor and productive classes, and the charges of Government should be reduced upon a scale corresponding with the general fall of prices and of wages. And as what is improperly called the National Debt, has been admitted, in both Houses of Parliament, to be in the nature of a *bonâ fide* mortgage upon the realized property of the country, it is but strict justice that the owners of this property

and they only, should be henceforward held responsible for both capital and interest. At all events, the industrious classes should not be held answerable for it, seeing the debt was not borrowed by them, nor for them, nor with their consent—and that, even had it been so, they have had no assets left them for the payment of it. Moreover, the realized property of this country being estimated at eight times the amount of the debt, the owners or mortgagers have no valid excuse or plea to offer on the score of inability for refusing to meet the claims of their mortgagees.

‘4. The gradual resumption by the State (on the acknowledged principle of equitable compensation to existing holders or their heirs) of its ancient, undoubted, inalienable dominion, and sole proprietorship over all the lands, mines, turbaries, fisheries, &c., of the United Kingdom and our colonies; the same to be held by the State, as trustee, in perpetuity, for the entire people, and rented out to them in such quantities as the law and local circumstances may determine; because the land, being the gift of the Creator to ALL, can never become the exclusive property of individuals—because the monopoly of the land in private hands is a palpable invasion of the rights of the excluded parties, rendering them, more or less, the slaves of landlords and capitalists, and tending to circumscribe or annul their other rights and liberties—because a monopoly of the earth by a portion of mankind is no more justifiable than would be the monopoly of air, light, heat, or water—and because the rental of the land (which justly belongs to the whole people) would form a national fund adequate to defray all charges of the public service, execute all needful public works, and educate the population, without the necessity of any taxation.

‘5. That, as it is the recognised duty of the State to support all those of its subjects who, from incapacity or misfortune, are unable to procure their own subsistence—and as the nationalization of landed property would open up new sources of occupation for the now surplus industry of the people (a surplus which is daily augmented by the accumulation of machinery in the hands of the capitalists)—the same principle which now sanctions a public provision for the destitute poor, should be extended to the providing a sound system of National Credit, through which any man might, under certain conditions, procure an advance from the national funds arising out of the proceeds of public property, and thereby be enabled to rent and cultivate land on his own account, instead of being subjected, as now, to the injustice and tyranny of wages-slavery (through which capitalists and profitiers are enabled to defraud him of his fair recompense), or being induced to become a hired slaughterer of his fellow-creatures at the bidding of godless diplomatists, enabling them to foment and prosecute international wars, and trample on popular rights, for

the exclusive advantage of aristocratic and "vested interest." The same privilege of obtaining a share in the national credit should be applicable to the requirements of individuals, companies and communities in all other branches of useful industry as well as agriculture.

'6. That the National Currency should be based on real sumeable wealth, or on the *bonâ fide* credit of the State, and not upon the variable and uncertain amount of scarce metals; that a currency depending on such a basis, however suitable at past times, or as a measure of value in present international commerce, has now become, by the increase of population and wealth, wholly inadequate to perform the functions of equitably representing and distributing that wealth—thereby rendering commodities liable to perpetual fluctuation in price, as metals happen to be more or less plentiful in any country, increasing to an enormous extent the evils inherent in usury, and in banking and funding systems (in support of which a legitimate function of the law—the *protection* of property—is distorted into an instrument for the *creation* of property to a large amount for the benefit of a small portion of society, belonging to what are called vested interests); because from its liability to be locally or nationally scarce, or in excess, that equilibrium should be maintained between the production and consumption of wealth is destroyed; because, being of intrinsic value in itself, it fosters a vicious trade in money, and a ruinous practice of commercial gambling and speculation; and, finally, because, in the present system of society, it has become confessedly the root of all evil," and the main support of that unholy worship of Mammon which now so extensively prevails, to the suppression of all true religion, natural and revealed.

'7. That in order to facilitate the transfer of property and the mutual interchange of wealth among the people, to equalize the demand and supply of commodities: to encourage consumption as well as production, and to render it as easy to sell as to buy, it is an important duty of the State to institute in every town and city, public marts or stores for the reception of kinds of exchangeable goods, to be valued by disinterested persons appointed for the purpose, either upon a corn or a labour standard; that the depositors to receive symbolic notes representing the value of their deposits; such notes to be made legal currency throughout the country, enabling their owners to draw from the public to an equivalent amount, thereby gradually displacing the reckless system of competitive trading and shop-keeping*—

* Shop-keeping is decidedly immoral, as it gives the seller an unfair advantage over the buyer, who is generally ignorant of the true value of the goods he purchases; and it is the immediate interest of the vendor to deceive him.

tem which, however necessary or unavoidable in the past, now produces a monstrous amount of evil, by maintaining a large class living on the profits made by the mere sale of goods, on the demoralizing principle of buying cheap and selling dear, totally regardless of the ulterior effects of that policy upon society at large, and the true interests of humanity.

‘It is not assumed that the foregoing Propositions comprise all the reforms needed in society. Doubtless there are many other reforms required besides those alluded to; doubtless we want a sound system of national education for youth, made compulsory upon all parents and guardians; doubtless we require a far less expensive system of military and naval defence than now obtains; doubtless we require the expropriation of railways, canals, bridges, docks, gas-works, water-works, &c.; and, doubtless, we require a juster and more humane code of civil and penal law than we now possess. But these and all other needful reforms will be easy of accomplishment when those comprised in the foregoing propositions shall have been effected. Without these, indeed, justice cannot be done to humanity; society cannot be placed in the true path of improvement, never again to be turned aside or thrown back; nor can those natural checks and counter-checks be instituted without which the conflicting passions and propensities of man fail to produce a harmonic whole; but with which, as in the material world, all things are made to work together for good, reconciling man to his position in the universe, and exalting his hopes of future destiny.’

In another publication of the League (its Prospectus) we find the following fundamental political and social axioms:—

‘1. That mere organic, financial, or fiscal reforms of society, even if founded on the most democratic or liberal bases, as already tested in Europe and America, have hitherto failed, and must ever fail, to ensure the substantial comfort and well-being of the people—because such reforms are, of themselves, incapable of removing certain *social* evils consequent upon a false estimation of the principal rights and duties of man, considered as an individual and as a member of society.

‘2. That man’s inalienable and imprescriptible rights are based on the natural necessities of his being; and that his duties arise out of his relation to, and dependence on, his fellow creatures.

‘3. That the possession of a right implies the responsibility of a duty: rights cannot be separated from duties, nor duties from rights.

‘4. *That in laying down a code of political and social rights*

and duties, the rights and duties of the individual should be made to harmonise with his rights and duties as a member of society.

'5. That the primary right of man is to conserve his existence, and increase the means of his happiness, by obeying or controlling the natural laws of his being, and of external nature, so far as may be practicable to him.

'6. That nature has provided every man, in his normal condition, with physical and mental powers, by the free exercise of which, upon, or through, the spontaneous gifts of Providence, he is enabled to supply the physical requirements of his being: every individual, therefore, has a just right to protest against all political laws, or social regulations, even if sanctioned by a majority of his fellows, which may tend, either wholly or in part—either directly or indirectly—to interfere with the free exercise of his powers in the pursuit of the means of conserving his existence, and promoting his happiness; provided, that in such pursuit he duly recognize and respect the equal right of every other individual to the same privilege.

'7. It being a natural ordination that the principal requirements of man's well-being can only be obtained by LABOUR, any political or social law which injuriously interferes to prevent the production, or the equitable distribution of wealth, or any conventional arrangement which partitions society into artificial castes, classes, or grades, and endows some of those classes with privileges by which they are enabled to participate in the wealth produced by useful industry, without being necessitated to perform useful labour or service in return—cannot be recognized under a just system: because no portion of mankind can rationally be entitled to enjoy the fruits of the industry of others without yielding to them an equivalent; unless such non-producing portion of society receive a special exemption, on account of age, incapacity, or disease.'

In a periodical called *The Reformer* (July 21, 1849), Mr. O'Brien makes this energetic asseveration and appeal:—

'I defy all the genius and statesmanship in the world to save a population from being the slaves of middle-class vampires so long as land is private property. I defy all the learning and ability in the United Kingdom to show me how we can be extricated from poverty and premature death in this country without a radical reform of our land and money-laws; unless there be a general scramble for poverty, to be followed by a re-beginning of society, *de novo*, which, in my estimate, would amount to a massacre of one half of the population, and a launching of the other half upon an unknown sea, without chart or compass.

'But if a few honest laws upon Land, Credit, Currency, and *Exchange* would at once stop social misery and social murder on

the one hand, and guarantee the owners of property, on the other, against spoliation and anarchy, *ought not every honest man, of every class, to give me his aid to create a public opinion in their favour ?*'

Much, very much, might be written in illustration of the doctrines enunciated by Mr. O'Brien, but this is not the place for dilatation. Large books are read but by few, and convert still fewer. Principles must be presented in an axiomatic or dogmatic form before they can penetrate the minds of the masses. Give the people true principles, and they will illustrate them for themselves.

But, alas! so deteriorated is the moral stamina of the people, that the word *principle* is almost tabooed among them—especially by what are called 'men of the world,' who make far greater use of the term *expediency*; and if an adherence to a principle would not promote their own short-sighted, immediate interests, they make it a principle to disregard *principle*. Among the population generally, abstract principles on any subject are scarcely entertained; and a man who talks about them is usually considered as a wild, crotchety, and impracticable dreamer. Even among the educated classes the amount of ignorance on the subject of the principles which do, or which should govern society, is astounding. Daily do we see men struggling through life, and borne down by the most grievous cares and anxieties to procure a mere subsistence; to keep 'the wolf from the door;' or to maintain a certain position in society, and yet never once seriously reflecting as to the *causes* of social evils, or asking whether poverty or the fear of it (which is nearly as bad as the reality) is the unalterable lot of at least four-fifths of the human race! And yet tongues prate and pens scribble about progress and enlightenment! Truly, so far as regards real political or social progress, the masses seem to be going backwards rather than forwards. We find that they have shorter lives than formerly (those born in towns reaching only half the attainable period of life); they are huddled together in more crowded dwellings;* that fewer of them have houses of their own; and that they passively submit to more governmental and social tyranny now than their forefathers would have put up with. Perhaps no more forcible proof of this can be adduced than the ease with which they have allowed greedy aristocrats and avaricious capitalists to rob them of their common-land rights, under the Inclosures' Act. These commons afforded the villagers and others valuable privileges of pasturage for cattle, geese, &c., as well as the means of practising healthful games and recreations.

* The number of persons to a house in England and Wales in 1841 was about $5\frac{1}{2}$; but, according to the returns of 1851, there was then only one house to every seven persons.

Yet so *enlightened* have the people become, that during the existence of the iniquitous Inclosure Commission* they have calmly allowed themselves to be deprived of millions of acres of most useful commonage, which even the feudal robbers of former times were not base enough to take from them! Why, even a Caffre, or a New Zealander, fights for his land; and yet a free and enlightened Briton has suffered himself to be so dragooned into passive obedience by his pastors and masters, by magistrates, policemen, and the 'terrors of the law,' as to submit to more than savages will bear calmly! Our peasantry, especially, seem to have lost all self-respect, and in the same proportion to have become the craven worshippers of the squires and parsons of their respective parishes, whom they regard as a kind of demigods. We have heard that the poor creatures on the estate of the late Sir W. W. Wynn, in Wales, actually entertained a vague notion that the worthy old baronet was to be God A'mighty when God A'mighty died!

What can be done with such a people? it may be asked. How can you raise them to an appreciation of your sublime views of liberty, equality, and fraternity? And we should be inclined to let echo answer, How? did we not know the influences of circumstances upon man; and that these poor people had never yet been told the truth upon any one subject of real importance to their moral, political, and social life. The 'truth' will make them 'free;' and if they refuse the truth when they know it, when they fully understand that the truth is a gospel of glad tidings to them, then we will fall in with the notion which some people entertain, that a special interference of Providence is required to regenerate the world—although, even then, we should expect no other interference than the advent of a man, or men, endowed with wisdom adequate to teach the new truths required, and coming with sufficient authority to make the people listen to their teaching.

And when these truths shall have been taught to the people, a 'new heaven' and a 'new earth' will be opened to their imaginations; and no longer will the untried sea of the future disturb their minds by anxious doubts, or fearful perplexities. Unde-

* We remember reading the following *jeu d'esprit* (or something to the same effect) which a wit made on this rascally piece of plundering according to act of parliament, which deserves to be recorded here:—

'If, legally, a man's a felon
Who steals a goose from off a common;
On them *Lynch law* should be let loose
Who steal the common from the goose!'

served poverty and unmerited riches; the tyranny of the strong, and the slavery of the weak; the darkness of the uncultivated intellect, and the bewildering glare of a meretricious, effeminate, and antiquated learning; and the multifarious evils attendant upon those conditions of humanity, will be for ever banished from the earth; and the glowing pictures of the millennial age, drawn by the sacred and profane poets of all countries, will be realized.

But in vain may we look for these promised blessings while landlords and profit-mongers (with their base instruments, state governments and state churches) shall be permitted to rule society for their own selfish purposes—'grinding the faces of the poor,' and treating them, in their own country, as a subjugated people, possessing no political or social rights but such as the property-classes choose to dole out to them, and then not as 'rights' but as 'bribe'—just as Lord John Russell had the impertinence to insinuate when he recently proposed to extend the parliamentary franchise to a few of the better off of the working classes—a piece of injustice which we hope will never be permitted, as it would only rivet faster the chains of their poorer brethren. To call upon men to obey laws, in the making of which they have had no share, is a species of tyranny which every honest man ought to meet to the utmost of his power; and which, if the middle and upper classes (who, by the way, never obey any law, even those made by themselves, if they deem it expedient to ignore it) had a spark of political justice in their composition, they would be ashamed to exercise. Property may have its just rights, but poverty has its just wants; and if the property-classes are afraid that universal suffrage would give the proletarian class an undue numerical advantage, let them graduate the number of votes to each elector in proportion to the amount of taxes he pays; only giving to every adult one vote, whether he pays taxes or not, in order that he may possess some influence over the law-making power—so far, at least, as he can possess under the present imperfect representative system.

CHAPTER V.

OBJECTIONS ANSWERED—CONCLUDING REMARKS.

WE will conclude our necessarily brief, but we trust comprehensive, inquiry, by anticipating one or two of the objections which smatterers and class-made political economists may make against our universal-prosperity system. One of the most formidable will come from the Malthusian school (one of high authority in this day, because it exonerates the rich from any responsibility for the distress of the people)—the bugbear of over-population. Remove, say they, the fear of poverty from the masses, and you remove all restraint upon early marriages, and virtually abolish the practice of celibacy: consequently, in a few years, the population of the country would be augmented far beyond any possible increase in the production of food; famine would inevitably ensue; and the condition of the country would be worse than it is at present.

Now, we are willing to admit that such *might* be the case were the present habits and opinions of the people, in respect to the population question, to remain unaltered—although that would be no valid argument against giving the people the plenitude of their rights and liberties. But need those habits and opinions remain as they are? In fact, are they not undergoing rapid changes? Malthus thought, or professed to think, that ‘moral restraint’ was the only desirable and proper remedy for a too rapid increase of the human race; but we believe that a little knowledge of ‘Moral Physiology’* is the only true and practical one. And in this belief we are happy to say we are borne out by some very respectable authorities. In Mr. J. S. Mill’s recent work on Political Economy, we find these paragraphs (vol. i., p. 440):—

‘While a man who is intemperate in drink is discountenanced and despised by all who profess to be moral people, is it not, to this hour, the favourite recommendation to any parochial office, bestowed by popular election, to have a large family, and to be unable to maintain them? Do not the candidates placard their intemperance on walls, and publish it through the town in circulars? . . . One cannot wonder that silence on this great department of human duty, should produce unconsciousness of moral obligations when it produces oblivion of physical facts. That it is possible to delay marriage, and to live in abstinence when

* See various pamphlets on this important subject, published by *Watson, Queen’s Head Passage, Paternoster Row.*

unmarried, most people are willing to allow; but when persons are once married, the idea (in this country) never seems to enter any one's mind that having or not having a family, or the number of which it shall consist, is at all amenable to their own control. One would imagine that children were rained down upon married people direct from heaven, without their being art or part in the matter—that it was really, as the phrases have it, God's will, and not their own, which decided the number of their offspring.'

The enlightened editor of *The Shepherd*, before quoted, has penned some excellent remarks on the subject of population. In vol. ii., p. 38, he says:—

'It is impossible to invent any practicable system of permanent amelioration until the subject of population be advanced to a science. It would be easy to provide for all the inhabitants of the empire, and to feed and clothe them well, if it were not certain that this good treatment would immediately increase the number to be provided for. Could the people be taught to observe a stationary amount of numbers, by making the births and deaths to correspond, universal material happiness might be the result, and not a hungry stomach be found in the country. But false religion, and false morals, and false delicacy conspire to prevent this happy consummation. It is the Devil's own world, and the pure in heart are determined to keep it so. In the genuine spirit of this purity, Malthusian Whigs have adopted the penal check, preferring the discipline of force to that of instruction. But they must fail. Every system must fail that is not established in the hearts of the people.'

In another periodical edited by him, called the *Penny Satirist*, he remarks:—'They are bad patriots who teach men to multiply and replenish this country with inhabitants. To replenish does not mean to breed paupers: it means to furnish the earth with comfortable beings, with houses, food, and clothing. This is the replenishing that is meant. We have already obeyed the first command to multiply; but the second, to replenish, is still in abeyance.... All men and women ought to marry; but there is no necessity for making mere breeding machines of the female sex, who have many other domestic duties of equal importance to perform, and which must be in part neglected when the command to multiply supersedes the duty of replenishing their houses with domestic comforts. "Who is a wise man will understand these things; prudent, and he will know them."'

The shackled state of public opinion would scarcely admit of the subject of artificial checks to population being mooted in *The Times*; but we have no hesitation in saying, that when that paper published the letter from which the following passages are extracted, both the writer and editor would have preferred, as

regarded Ireland, almost any check to a reckless increase of the people to those laid down by Malthus—namely, ‘vice, misery, and moral restraint’—seeing that something far more positive was required:—

‘At the period I allude to, it was common to see a man and woman, just fresh from Ireland, walking in the street, the woman evidently pregnant; one child in her arms, another at her back, two at the skirts of her gown, and the man leading one in each hand, and, not unfrequently, carrying one on his back.

‘A wise Providence has put a check upon the brute creation, to prevent an excessive increase; but man has been left to be guided by reason. These Irish, however, seem to have none—nothing but a brute instinct and appetite, totally unguided by reason or foresight. What commiseration can we have for these people, and why should we be called upon to support them? To do so is, in effect, a premium for recklessness and improvidence.’—(15th Oct., 1847.)

We need not pursue the subject of population further, having, we hope, cited authorities sufficient to substantiate our argument that the over-population objection to the universal fruition of human rights is not valid; and, as it can scarcely be argued that marriage for the sake of reproduction alone is inculcated by any law, human or divine, so neither can it be proved to be immoral, or in any way prejudicial to society, for people to exercise a prudent foresight after they are married, so as not to bring children into the world with no better prospects before them than of their offspring becoming the helpless slaves of landlords, usurers, and money-lords!

Another class of objectors will be those who have been pampered all their lives in the lap of luxury; who, as O'Brien says, never knew how to do anything useful for their fellows, and would not be inclined to do it even if they did know how; who have their daily wants supplied by the forced labour of others; and who would consider the world was coming to an end, or not worth living in, if they had any real work to do—if they had even to clean their own shoes, to cook their own food, or to wash their own dirty linen. Many of this class, we verily believe, would rather die than live without slaves, white or black; and such people will use the most diabolical arts, make the most desperate efforts, and even fight up to their knees in carnage, before they will submit to acknowledge, in practice, equal laws and equal rights, based on universal justice and humanity. With these parties we cannot attempt to reason; and we must leave them to the consequences of their folly and selfishness.

But many persons even, who are not quite so far wedded to aristocratic prejudices and luxurious habits, and who have no

objection to be industrious and useful in their day, will not easily give up their opinion that certain classes of the people must always be devoted to certain disagreeable, laborious, and dangerous occupations: such as digging coals and metals out of the bowels of the earth; working at unhealthy manufactures; making and cleansing roads, sewers, privies, and drains; tending cattle, tilling the soil, and traversing sea and land in all climates and all weathers for the purposes of trade and commerce. Who will do all these things, say they, if you make every man independent, and not necessitated to work at the bidding or will of others, but only to supply his own necessities? It is scarcely necessary to enter upon an extended answer to these questions. Every man should have the power as well as the right to labour or withhold his labour at his pleasure. Besides, when men have to supply their own wants by their own bodily exertions, or to give a satisfactory and a just equivalent to others for doing it for them, more than half of the labour now performed by chattel or wages-slaves will, we feel convinced, be speedily voted unnecessary. It will then be discovered and acknowledged that a vast mass of the articles of luxury, which artificial wants have given rise to, are by no means indispensable for human happiness. When correct ideas of honour, justice, and humanity shall take root in society, people will be ashamed to have menial servants and crouching drudges about them (even if they could be had); and plush breeches and tawdry coats,* if used at all, will only be used as a species of

* It is usual to call the poor fellows wearing these badges of Christianized slavery, *flunkeys*—meaning thereby something very *ungentle* and dependent; but according even to the milk-and-watery Chambers (*vide Journal*, Feb. 8, 1851), *flunkeyism* rules throughout English society; and they recommend the *Johnnies* to put a few questions like the following to their detractors:—

‘Who is a flunkey? The soldier, who sells himself, body and soul, to the drill-serjeant; who stands up to be shot at, or runs away, just as he is ordered; who cuts throats when he is able, at the word of command, for lower wages than an Irish labourer cuts corn; and who values the limbs he may leave on the field at no more than the price of well-fashioned timber.

‘Who is a flunkey? The sailor who, for his miserable mess of pottage, submits to a perpetual voyage of transportation, living as in a prison—only, quoth Dr. Johnson, in worse company—sleeping in the darkest, narrowest, and filthiest of dungeons, and constantly liable to find himself, on awaking, in contact with such “strange bedfellows” as rocks, sharks, and tempests.

‘Who is a flunkey? The politician who yokes himself, with his eyes open, to the car of a party, helping to drag it along

“Thorough muck thorough mire.”

disgraceful punishment for some serious offence. Gentlewo will be transformed into noble women; and a really noble wo would disdain to have cringing, fawning abigails at her beck call; she will think it no hardship to dress her own hair, pu her own clothes, and even make them with her own hands. I haps a greater simplicity of costume might be thereby nece tated, but that need not be in bad taste, nor inimical to femir charms. With the admission of the true doctrine of equal ostentation and parade would be ridiculous. Splendid furnit costly dresses, expensive living, and frivolous amusements, be condemned by public opinion, as well as rendered impractic by the abolition of wages-slavery. Moreover, the greater par the laborious work necessary to promote the rational happines man would be performed by machinery and chemistry; and t which could only be executed by manual exertions would be p for at a higher rate than any other labour, and not at a lower it is at the present day. Men will discover, too, that it is merely to *work* that they have been created, but they hav right to endeavour to *enjoy life*, soberly and rationally. acquire the means of so doing, and to improve and perfect manity, will be considered the only proper motives for work; any labour or any employment, either of mind or body, wh will not conduce to that end, will be shunned as beneath the c nity of man, and opposed to his true interests. But labour these purposes will never be considered a burthensome toil, ennui will be unknown; because as every man, not incapacita by age or disease, will be required to give to society an equal

however offensive and suffocating; who bawls himself hoars honour of the sleek idol who holds the reins; who never shri from his share of the ancient eggs and decomposed cabbages w which the procession is greeted by the rival party; and wh length drops and dies in the midst of his task without ever h ing known what it was to live the life or think the thoughts c freeman.

‘Who is a flunkey? The fashionist who binds himself, hi and foot, soul and body, in conventionalities which deprive l of all power of thought or action, save at the impulse of othe whose dress, movements, look, manners, habits, affections, er tions, passions, are all matter of tyrannical prescription; and who is vain of his fetters, and feels an insane terror at the idea divesting himself of them for an instant.

‘Who is a flunkey? The hireling author, who writes what does not believe, who flatters tastes he despises, who panders appetites he abhors, who turns the sacred press into a source *dishonest gain*; and yet whose highest reward is a crust, a garr *an obscure death*, and an undistinguished grave.’

for what he takes from society, he will always have a certain amount of compulsory labour to perform every day—just enough to give a wholesome appetite for leisure, to strengthen the physical frame, to exercise the intellect, and to discipline the moral propensities and sentiments.

Under such a state of things, as O'Brien has often remarked in his lectures, 'human beings will know nothing from birth to death but the joys of life;' and all evil will be banished from the world, excepting only so much as is necessary to give zest to existence; and at the same time to prepare us for that mysterious change of death, which, by the necessary laws of nature, we are ordained to undergo.

Whoever may read the preceding pages with attention, will, we believe, concur with us in the opinion, that those writers or orators who tell the people not to look to political reforms for any amelioration in their condition—are no real friends to humanity; and that, in fact, they are, either wittingly or unwittingly, direct obstacles to all true progress. Unless political right and justice be established, no other kind of right or justice can be acquired and retained by the people; because it is the political power that prescribes the laws and institutions which govern society, however oppressive and exacting those laws and institutions may be to the masses. Surely every sane man ought to take the liveliest interest in the law-making power, when he knows that he may himself be the helpless victim of that power—especially when what are hypocritically termed offences against 'society,' 'order,' and 'good government' are concerned—especially, too, when he sees a set of brigands, as in France, composed of the most corrupt and venal of all classes of the population, backed by rich landlords, usurers, and profit-mongers, and aided by the terror inspired by immense hordes of hired assassins, usurp the functions of government by force, and then have the audacity to frame numberless decrees, to coerce all honest men into a tacit admission of the legality of their tyranny, either by secret influences, or the fear of destitution, imprisonment, or transportation. With so recent an example as this before us, and with a government which has openly applauded it, surely it behoves every unprivileged and unfranchised man to become a politician, or if one already, to redouble his efforts to acquire at least such a share of political power as may counter-balance the responsibility forced upon him? A government made up of men who could applaud Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état*, as ours has done, would not hesitate to concoct one themselves, if they deemed it necessary, in order, as they say, to 'oppose a barrier against the current that is continually encroaching, of a noxious and dangerous democratic influence.'

No more baneful fallacy exists than that which is embodied in the oft-quoted lines of Goldsmith :—

‘ How small of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure.’

The very converse is the truth ; and the lines might be fairly roddied thus, without exaggeration :—

‘ All social wrongs that human hearts endure
Bad laws create, and good alone can cure.’

What is it that creates poverty—the mother of slavery, idleness, and misery—but unjust laws, by which the many are robbed for the benefit of the few ? A poverty-stricken people can never be a free, a happy, a religious, or an educated people. No reform that will not give the people the means of acquiring property by honest industry—which will not enable them to be independent of wages-slavery—which will not enable them to build houses of their own, and allow them free access to the soil of the country, is worth their serious attention. Had the Continental revolutionists of 1848 been wise enough to see this, they would not have fallen into the sad and pitiable condition in which we now find them. But, much as we may deplore their present sufferings and lament the fearful sacrifices so many honest reformers made in vainly struggling for freedom, we cannot disguise from ourselves the conviction that their leaders had not duly made use of the true science of society,* or were fully sensible of the da-

* Not such a ‘ science of society ’ as the Owenites have been teaching for so many years—the essence of which is, that as man does not form his own character, neither praise nor blame, reward nor punishment, can be rationally awarded to him. They pretend to have derived this ‘ science ’ from an external knowledge of man and nature ; and yet man’s strongest instinct revolts at it ; and the principal means used by nature herself to teach wisdom to her children is by rewarding us for obeying her laws, and punishing us for disobeying them. According to the Owenian doctrine, we are never to blame anybody, let him commit whatever crime he may ; we must endeavour to surround him with ‘ rational circumstances ’—as if pains and penalties were not ‘ rational circumstances ! ’ Truly, nothing can be more hopeless than the idea of converting tyrants and wicked men into lambs and doves, by telling them that they are not to be punished, they are only *mistaken*—and that if they will but consent to give up their present selfish practices, and go and live in communion with their victims, they will be far happier ; forgetting that they may have already far more advantages than any community can give them, and that, too, at the expense of those very vic-

of their position, and of the corrupt forces which would be sure to be arrayed against any attempt to inaugurate the reign of justice in the world, otherwise they would have taken sufficient precautions against them. Moreover, the new laws and institutions by which they attempted to re-organise society, were mostly false and subversive, giving to artificial systems a precedence over natural rights, and leaving everything to be done by the state for the people, instead of teaching the people to become gradually independent of the state. It is truth alone that can make the nations free: and a sufficient amount of either religious, moral, political, or social truth has not yet been disseminated in the world to enable men clearly to see their way out of the mazes of error in which mankind are now groping in every department of life. Besides, the temporary success of false principles only leads men further astray, and renders the right path more difficult to find. But truth and good will at last be taught to mankind, even by the pains and penalties of error and evil—if by no other means, and after the nations, especially the French, shall have taken another draught of the cup of misery, we trust their eyes will be opened; and that the next revolutions they attempt will be proceeded with in the right way, and directed towards the right objects.

According to this doctrine, the poor slave, whose back is being lacerated by the lash of his cruel taskmaster, must indulge in no resentful feelings for the injustice done upon him! He must wait patiently until the 'rational system of society' permeates his master's stony heart, and not endeavour to wrest the whip from his grasp, and make him feel the weight of it on his own shoulders.—As for the formation of character, the governing classes know very well that the masses do not form their own character; and so they do all they can to form it for them, through the medium of the false teaching, religious cant, and senseless gabble, which they disseminate through the country by their paid tools, the clergy, the lawyers, the schoolmasters, and the venal scribes of the press—especially the newspaper press, which they have subsidized for the purpose of bamboozling the people, and disguising from them the real causes of all their miseries—class-legislation, land-monopoly, usury, and profit-mongering. Seriously, the Owenite principles, if they were ever acted upon, would quickly destroy all proper distinction between right and wrong, and render it impossible to effect any essential reformation of society. We have no objection to try reason and kindness in reclaiming bad men, if they show themselves open to such influences; but, if mild measures will not suffice, forcible and coercive ones are the only alternatives. If society cannot persuade men to be generous, it has at least the power of compelling them to be just.

The policy of an absolute and forcible repression of the people is now in the ascendant throughout Europe. It has risen, as Victor Hugo remarks, 'to the height of a theory of government;' but it is not a truth, it is a sham, and cannot long stand before the concentrated rays of truth now being thrown upon it from thousands of intellectual reflectors. It is a false and damnable heresy against the popular and ordinary instincts of humanity, and is not believed even by the governing classes themselves, who only defend it on the plea that their foul and treacherous crimes and usurpations are necessary for the salvation of society, and the maintenance of religion, law, family, and order! Behold the result of this policy! Behold the desolation it has produced! Surely it must be 'the abomination of desolation' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, 'standing where it ought not;' producing 'affliction such as was not from the beginning of the creation' (St. Mark, ch. xiii.). But the apostle tells us that these days shall be shortened; for otherwise *no flesh could be saved*. And better, far better, would it be for the mass of mankind that they were annihilated—that the very earth itself should be blown into atoms, than that the majority of its people should continue, for an indefinite period, the helpless victims of false governments, false laws, false religions, false morals, false hopes, false fears;—defrauded of their natural rights and liberties, robbed of the fruits of their industry, turned into crouching slaves and drivelling paupers, lorded over by state brigands, befooled by fribbling priests—and all to subserve the selfish interests of land monopolizers, profit-mongers, and usurers!

THE END.

LONDON:

Printed by Holyoake Brothers, 3, Queen's Head Passage, Paternoster Row.



